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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

Society and Education – II

MAN is first to be saved; he must be given food, education, and spirituality.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.

Why does not the nation move? First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring. The kings are gone; where is the new sanction, the new power of the people? Bring it up. Therefore, even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to wait till that time comes.

When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach; it goes beyond intellect, and reaches to what is called inspiration. Always cultivate the heart.

The greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet



ripe for schools. Gradually will be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women, exactly like those for men.

Our character has disappeared. Our English education has destroyed everything and left nothing in its place. Our children have lost their politeness. To talk nicely is degrading. To be reverential to one's elders is degrading. Irreverence has been the sign of liberty. It is high time that we go back to our old politeness. The reformers have nothing to give in place of what they have taken away. Yet in spite of the most adverse surrounding of climate, etc., we have been able to do much, we have to do much more. I am proud of my race, I do not despair, (and) I am seeing daily a glorious and wonderful future in my mental visions. Take greatest care of these young ones on whom our future depends.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1.415, 2.15, 3.216, 4.484–5, 6.451, 9.546–7.



RP-Sanjiv Goenka
Group



TRADITIONAL WISDOM

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Living in Truth

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प्राजापत्यो हारुणिः सुपर्णेयः प्रजापतिं पितरमुपससार
किं भगवन्तः परमं वदन्तीति तस्मै प्रोवाच ॥
सत्येन वायुरावाति सत्येनादित्यो रोचते दिवि सत्यं वाचः
प्रतिष्ठा सत्ये सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं तस्मात्सत्यं परमं वदन्ति ॥

Aruni, the son of Prajapati and Suparna, approached his father Prajapati—thus we have heard—and questioned him: ‘What is that which revered teachers declare as the supreme means of liberation?’ To him Prajapati thus replied: ‘By Truth the wind blows. By Truth the sun shines in the sky. Truth is the foundation of speech. Everything in practical life depends on Truth. Therefore, they say Truth is the supreme means of liberation.’

(*Mahanarayana Upanishad*, 79.1–2)

ॐ वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म एधि वेदस्य
म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान् संदधाम्यृतं वदिष्यामि
सत्यं वदिष्यामि तन्मामवतु तद्वक्तारमवत्ववतु मामवतु वक्तारमवतु वक्तारम् ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om! May my speech be based on the mind; may my mind be based on speech. O Self-effulgent One, reveal thyself to me. May not all that I have heard depart from me. I shall join together day and night through study. I shall utter what is verbally true; I shall utter what is mentally true. May That (Brahman) protect me; may That protect the speaker (the teacher); may That protect me; may That protect the speaker, may That protect the speaker.
Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

(Shanti mantra of the *Aitareya Upanishad*)

तेषामसौ विरजो ब्रह्मलोको न येषु जिह्ममृतं न माया चेति ॥

For them (seers) is that taintless world of Brahman, in whom there is no crookedness, no falsehood, and no dissimulation.

(*Prashna Upanishad*, 1.16)

THIS MONTH

Humankind, with the help of religion, has grappled with innumerable forms of evil. As human consciousness expands, we come to understand evil's real abode: the ego. Now it is a question of time till we can annihilate **Evil and Its Twin**.

Those who have stood for truth have suffered, but ultimately have become indestructible and immortal as they embody truth. Umesh Gulati, a devotee and member of the Vedanta Society of Northern Carolina, USA, writes on **Truth alone Triumphs**.



Subhasis Chattopadhyay's insightful **Prolegomenon to the Study of Evil** details the many shocking forms of evil that we take for granted. The author is assistant professor of English, Ramananda College, Bishnupur, West Bengal.

Vikramshila: An Ancient Seat of Education was a great Buddhist university in what is now Bhagalpur, Bihar. Dr Alpana Ghose, former head of the Department of Chemistry, Ranchi Women's College, briefly describes Vikramshila's history and its impact on the Buddhism, India, and Asia of that time.



Astrophysics and astrobiology are helping humans understand life and its origins on Earth. Vikram H Zaveri, a mechanical engineer who works as a consultant, writes on **Advaita Vedanta and the Big Bang**.

In the concluding part of **Vivekananda's Impact on the World of Ideas**, Dr Satish K Kapoor, Ex-British Council scholar and registrar of Dayananda Anglo Vedic University, Jalandhar, specifies Swamiji's contribution to a scientific understanding of humankind and its deeper divine nature.



In the seventh part of **Eternal Words**, Swami Adbhutananda speaks on worldly possessions and worldly wisdom as well as on how to pray and live honestly depending on God. The swami's words are translated from *Sat Katha*, published by Udbodhan Office, Kolkata.



The twelfth instalment of **Svarajya Siddhi: Attaining Self-dominion** by the eighteenth century Gangadharendra Saraswati, fifteenth pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham, Kanchipuram, discusses the important first few sutras of the *Brahma Sutra*.

EDITORIAL

Evil and Its Twin

IT IS AN INDISPUTABLE FACT that the problem of evil is increasing in the world and the media and cinema brings that stench from all over to us. Tell this fact to a small child and it will ask 'what is evil?' The child has no ideas of evil, but as it grows it learns, faces, struggles against, and fathoms a bit of evil's various modes and forms. This growing child has been educated to recognize the fact of evil. It is obvious that there is an instinctive reaction either for or against evil, but much of our reactions to this reality depend also on our upbringing, culture, morals, and economic standards. Other important causes for the increasing evil we see in the world are, paradoxically, more due to our expanding consciousness, our growing sense of morality, the worldwide information at our fingertips, and our questioning. Thus this mental evolution, which is doing superb things for humankind, is also weighed down with the disquiet of evil.

There was a time when poverty, dirt, squalor, and illiteracy were associated with evil. Ideological and cultural differences such as race, language, religious beliefs, worship, and so on were also seen as evil. And this was, as ignorant people said and believed, the work of the devil who, along with the 'different' people, had to be exterminated. For thousands of years these exterminators were doing evil by creating untold misery in the world. Today human consciousness has grown above such narrow perceptions and personalizations of evil. Much of humanity has also left behind those who believe in absolute good and evil. This growing consciousness

has eliminated much evil and along with it much misery as well.

Today's humanity has also eliminated the old ideas of a Godhead who is good but powerless—for thousands of years this Personal God has not been able to do anything about evil. All puerile arguments defending God for the existence of evil are found to be just that puerile—duality in religion and philosophy solved children's problems, not grown-up's problems. Swami Vivekananda asks the question that is in all our minds: 'Why under the reign of an almighty and all-loving God of the universe should diabolical things be allowed to remain? Why so much more misery than happiness, and so much more wickedness than good? We may shut our eyes to all these things, but the fact still remains that this world is a hideous world.'

Thus, if our growing consciousness and sense of morality increases our perception of evil, the same has also helped us eliminate old forms of evil. We had proposed that evil is real and that it can be recognized, hated, and avoided, but the same evil comes in various forms, many a times or almost all the times, disguised as good. The curious thing about evil is its twin: not another evil, but the good.

Every culture has a mythology about the creation of evil and how one must stay away from its grips and enticements. The logical next step is a code of conduct that countered evil. Then come the priests who enforce and insist on people following these codes, and finally all together build institutions. So much of human

thought and energy has been spent on evil in the past. Today evil is a lucrative business earning trillions of rupees.

Good deeds bring happiness and whatever makes people miserable is due to evil. Those who directly or indirectly commit evil deeds suffer. Nations and corporations that exploit weaker nations do inevitably destroy themselves. The history of the world is also the history of taking revenge, of retribution, of the effects of karma. There is one great hope and assurance for people, that the laws of karma are the sentries, police, judiciary, jailors, and executioners—all rolled into one. No one can get away from one's deeds, be they good or bad. Not only is karma individual but also collective: if one has indirectly been benefited by some exploitation, done far away in time, then one also indirectly becomes the beneficiary of the bad consequences that follow. This is how we are knowingly or unknowingly being hounded by the effects of our own evil deeds and those of others as well.

This type of consciousness is bringing about a higher sense of control in human beings; this control is derived from a higher degree of morality. Swamiji says: 'The old gods were found to be incongruous—these boisterous, fighting, drinking, beef-eating gods of the ancients—whose delight was in the smell of burning flesh and libations of strong liquor. Sometimes Indra drank so much that he fell upon the ground and talked unintelligibly. These gods could no longer be tolerated. The notion had arisen of enquiring into motives, and the gods had to come in for their share of inquiry. Reason for such-and-such actions was demanded and the reason was wanting. Therefore man gave up these gods, or rather they developed higher ideas concerning them.'

Ethics and morality always comes along with a degree of self-control, and with a higher

consciousness this control is becoming natural. The old ideas of projecting evil on people, places, things, theology, mythology, demons, gods and goddesses, heavens and hells is now over. Similarly, blaming such things for the good is also passé. The twin gods—called good and evil—the world really worshipped were the products of minds steeped in ignorance. As soon as societies came out of the shadows of such worship, human consciousness began growing phenomenally.

Human life—rather all life—is uncertain, mysterious, conflicting, and full of paradoxes. Such a life of struggles may not be worth living, but it certainly evolves life and mind. All the conflicts and paradoxes are like a cocoon, which though binding us is necessary for our development and to finally break from all bonds.

The ancient Vedanta had long ago made both good and evil into one phenomenon—for what is food for one person is poison for another person. They called this phenomenon *maya*, which is the chain that ties us down to the world and to karma. Vedanta also brought both God and the world together; no more was there any distinction. As the mind ascends higher, *maya* changes its form from evil-good to neutral, and at the highest point it disappears. It exists as long as we feel we are individuals, as long as we have a sense of ego. *Maya* thus captures the ego and then depends on it. Eliminate the ego and the whole world of *maya* disappears. In that instant one sees that there is one reality called God, and the path to this is paved by living a life centred on truth. Sri Ramakrishna says that truth is the austerity for this age. Such a life is full of truth, of beauty, of consciousness, of existence, and of bliss. In such a life the twins of good and evil disappear like an apparition before the blazing fire of Truth, and we see the one Reality, absolute and pure, untouched by *maya*. This is freedom while still living.





Truth alone Triumphs

Umesh Gulati

THE PHRASE '*Satyameva jayate*; Truth alone triumphs', which appears on the national emblem of India and in all Indian government documents, is originally from the *Mundaka Upanishad*.¹ Truth is the beginning and end of everything; it is both the means and the end of spirituality. Truth is God, and God is truth. The Upanishads lay great stress on turning our minds and senses inwards to derive eternal happiness, for happiness does not lie in acquiring worldly goods but in being and realizing the spiritual treasure, the Atman, which is beyond time, space, and causation.

How must one live one's life to realize this treasure? The scriptures proclaim that one must live a life of truthfulness in order to find joy and meaning in it. The Sanskrit word '*satya*' has many connotations. It means truthfulness, honesty, loyalty, faithful, undecitfulness, actual, genuine, good, and a host of similar words. To see things in the right perspective, to speak about something as it is, and to practise what one preaches is *satya*. Acharya Shankara explained that *satya*, speaking the truth, means conveying an idea or expression in exactly the same manner as one

understands it. He also points out that an untruthful person is defeated by a truthful person, and that truth is a powerful discipline.²

Satya in the Scriptures

There are many instances in the Mahabharata that illustrate the virtues of truth and righteousness. Just before the Kurukshetra War, Duryodhana sought his mother Gandhari's blessings. He expected her to bless him to be victorious! But Gandhari said: 'Where there is Dharma there Victory is.'³ She knew that whoever holds on to truth and righteousness will be victorious, and that is exactly what happened in the end. Duryodhana lost and the Pandava brothers were victorious because they were firm in their devotion to truth.

In the Ramayana, one of the most popular scriptures of the Hindus, Sri Rama is the embodiment of all the virtues, especially the virtue of truthfulness in the sense of being faithful to the given word—even faithful to the word given by his father! It is for the sake of truth that he lost his kingdom. Again there is a famous and very popular couplet in the *Ramacharitmanasa*: '*Raghukul-riti sada chali aai, prana jahun, baru bachanu na*

jayi; it has ever been a rule in the house of Raghu to lose life rather than forsake truth.⁴

Vedanta asserts that speaking the truth is an important virtue for progressing in spiritual life. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* there is a story of a young boy named Satyakama. One day he told his mother that he wanted to go to a guru to have religious education and, as was the custom, he wanted to know his family name. The mother told him that she did not know his family name, as in her youth she was a servant and worked in many places. She did not know who his father was. She said to the boy: 'I am Jabala, and you are Satyakama. You are Satyakama Jabala.' Thereupon the boy went to the teacher Gautama and requested to be accepted as a student. 'Of what family are you, my lad?' enquired the sage. He repeated what his mother had told him and ended by declaring: 'I am, therefore, Satyakama Jabala, Sir.' Then the sage said: 'No one but a true brahmana would have spoken thus. Go and fetch fuel, for I will teach you. You have not swerved from the truth.'⁵

This intense devotion to truth has to be understood in the light of the belief that it is mainly by this quality that God is known. The person who loves truth must, in the end, love God; one who does not love truth does not love God. All other vices can be forgiven, but never the fault of being untruthful. This alone is the unpardonable sin.⁶

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Make your mind and speech one.' Indeed, his life exemplified truthfulness not only in spiritual but in mundane matters as well. According to him, truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the Kali Yuga:

If a man clings tenaciously to truth he ultimately realizes God. ... If by chance I say that I will go to the pine-grove, I must go there even if there is no further need of it, lest I lose my attachment to truth. After my vision of the Divine

Mother, I prayed to Her, taking a flower in my hands: 'Mother, here is Thy knowledge and here is Thy ignorance. Take them both, and give me only pure love. Here is Thy holiness and here is Thy unholiness. Take them both, Mother, and give me pure love. Here is Thy good and here is Thy evil. Take them both, Mother, and give me pure love. Here is Thy righteousness and here is Thy unrighteousness. Take them both, Mother, and give me pure love.' I mentioned all these, but I could not say: 'Mother, here is Thy truth and here is Thy falsehood. Take them both.' I gave up everything at Her feet but could not bring myself to give up truth.⁷

Our Real Nature

It is often said that in business and politics truth has to take the back seat. For, while in politics people would not mind going to any extent in lying about their opponents to gain power, in business the main focus is on money. The business of business is profit, and the business of politics is power, yet both are linked. For many who are in business or in politics moral virtues like truthfulness, unselfishness, and loving our neighbours as ourselves belong to a different dimension; they believe that living a virtuous life is not practical. To such an assertion Swami Vivekananda said: '*Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die.* Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society.'⁸

The problem with most of us is that we identify ourselves with our body-mind complex, our intellect and ego, and seldom pay serious attention to the truth of the scriptures, the truth that we are the Atman, the Self, which is immortal. Instead, we are so much involved in worldliness, being attached to our families, pleasing our bosses to win their favours, and putting our own interests first, that we never make the necessary effort to realize our divine nature.

There are, however, instances in the history of India of people who gave up their lives to uphold their spiritual convictions. Once, Alexander the Great, who invaded North India, saw an old and half-naked sadhu sitting calm and unworried. The young emperor found him to be a great man of wisdom. Alexander asked the sage to accompany him back to his country and promised him wealth. The sadhu refused; this annoyed Alexander, who threatened to kill him if he did not comply. The sage laughed and said: 'You cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, fire cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, the ever-living omnipotent, omnipresent Spirit' (2.85).

Swami Vivekananda prompted humanity to believe in this truth and dare to practise it. Only then can we end selfishness, hatred, fear; only then can we end the crimes that are bringing so much misery to the world; only then can we end all wars and the killing of millions of innocent men and women. There is no excuse in saying that we are not saints, that we are just human beings. As the well-known saying goes: 'Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.'⁹ Therefore, every one of us has a built-in capacity to realize the Self, the Truth, which is our real nature, immortal, pure, and perfect.

Of course, dicta stated in the scriptures like 'Truth alone triumphs' are not commandments, which need to be followed at the risk of being punished, if not carried out, by God. These dicta are not like rules either, which prescribe a particular course of action and tell a person what to do and what not to do. They are rather principles, which are aids and instruments in judging possible courses of action.¹⁰ Principles do not tell us specifically what to do but rather what to think about in deciding what to do. The Upanishads say: 'This Atman is first to be heard of, then thought about, and then meditated upon.'¹¹

For example, truthfulness is one of the five principles that comprise *yama*, the first step of the eightfold path of raja yoga. But *yama* also includes non-injury, or non-violence. There can be situations when following the principle of 'speaking the truth' might conflict with the principle of 'non-injury'. In that case the scriptures enjoin us to think and reflect whether following the letter of the law would not injure one or other member of society. If it would indeed hurt someone, then the wise advise us to: 'Speak the truth but speak the pleasant truth, do not speak an unpleasant truth; speak the pleasant but not untruth, this is the eternal dharma.'¹² As Sri Ramakrishna would say, one must always consider the time, place, and nature of a person before saying anything.

Swami Vivekananda, being an Oriental, his skin seemed dark to white Americans, and in the south of the US he was often mistaken for an African American—sometimes he was even insulted. But the swami invariably received rude remarks and rude glances with the grand indifference of a yogi. After all, what was racial prejudice to a person who saw in every other person his sister or brother? Once an African American porter, who had seen the swami being welcomed by a reception committee, came up to him and said how happy he was to see one of his own people become a great man, and added that he would like to have the privilege of shaking hands with him. The swami warmly clasped his hand and exclaimed: 'Thank you! Thank you, brother!'¹³

In barbershops of northern and southern states of the US the swami was not infrequently refused service. Several times in important cities of the south he was refused admittance to a hotel because of his 'dark' colour. Long afterwards, when referring to these incidents, a Western disciple asked him in surprise why he had not told them who he was, and the swami replied: 'What!

rise at the expense of another? I did not come to earth for that!' (Ibid.). What broadmindedness and what strength of moral character! Indeed, being a true non-dualist, he saw himself in all beings and all beings in himself; he identified himself with one and all.

Truth and Brahman Are Synonymous

Brahman is of the nature of *sat*, existence; *chit*, consciousness; and *ananda*, bliss absolute; It is Satchidananda. You and I exist, are conscious of things around us, and feel joy or sorrow, speak the truth or tell lies, and so forth, but Brahman is existence absolute; It is. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* states: 'Brahman is truth, knowledge, and infinity';¹⁴ and the *Chhandogya Upanishad*: 'Thou art That'.¹⁵ Swami Vivekananda says: 'The Real Man, therefore, is one and infinite, the omnipresent Spirit. And the apparent man is only a limitation of that Real Man. ... Every soul is infinite, therefore there is no question of birth and death.'¹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi also said: 'Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *sat* or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact, it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth.'¹⁷ In other words, Brahman is the ultimate Reality, knowledge absolute, and infinite; It is one without a second. How can one's finite mind think of that which is infinite? And since spoken words are the objectification of thoughts, words cannot express Brahman or Truth; It has to be realized and experienced.

Vedanta espouses the harmony between religions, between religion and science, and between religion and atheism. That attitude has been inculcated in India from the time of the ancient Rig Veda up to Sri Ramakrishna in our times: '*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*; Truth is one, sages call It by various names.'¹⁸ Through this verse the rishis acknowledge that Truth, or

God, has diverse expressions, but behind everything there is unity. This concept of unity in diversity is not based on any dogma, it is the result of the realizations of countless sages.

Truth and Brahman are synonymous. Indeed, in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we find Sri Ramakrishna using the words 'Brahman' and 'Truth' alternately. For example, while talking with Dr Sarkar, who was treating him for his cancer, he said: 'Whatever path you may follow, you must pray to God with a restless heart. He is the Ruler of the soul within. ... Whether you follow the ideal of the Personal God or the Impersonal Truth, you will realize God alone, provided you are restless for Him.'¹⁹ On the one hand, Sri Ramakrishna said that 'truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the Kali Yuga', on the other hand, he also stressed the next sentence: 'If a man clings tenaciously to truth he ultimately realizes God.' Therefore, the goal of our life is to realize the Truth, and to do so we need to be truthful in all our endeavours.

A person established in Truth cannot say what Truth is; one has to be in that state to know, or rather experience, what Truth is. No wonder, a person in that state remains silent. Indeed, 'silence' is another word that can be associated with Truth or Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna gave an interesting allegory to stress this last point:

Suppose the husband of a young girl has come to his father-in-law's house and is seated in the drawing-room with other young men of his age. The girl and her friends are looking at them through the window. Her friends do not know her husband and ask her, pointing to one young man, 'Is that your husband?' 'No', she answers, smiling. They point to another young man and ask if he is her husband. Again she answers no. They repeat the question, referring to a third, and she gives the same answer. At last they point to her husband and ask, 'Is he the one?' She says neither yes nor no, but only smiles and

keeps quiet. Her friends realize that he is her husband (280).

Sri Ramakrishna visited Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar in August 1882 at the latter's house in Calcutta. Vidyasagar was a great scholar, educator, writer, and philanthropist of his time. He was also versed in Sanskrit grammar and poetry. Sri Ramakrishna had heard of him and went to Calcutta to meet him. Of course, his conversations always related to spiritual matters, no political matters were discussed. During the course of the meeting Sri Ramakrishna said: 'What Brahman is cannot be described. All things in the world—the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras, the six systems of philosophy—have been defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled in this way, and that is Brahman. No one has been able to say what Brahman is.' Appreciatively Vidyasagar said: 'Oh! That is a remarkable statement' (102). So when one says that 'Truth cannot be described'—therefore its name is silence—and at the same time asserts that 'truthfulness alone is the spiritual discipline to realize God in the Kali Yuga', it has to be understood within the context in which the word 'Truth' has been used. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'In Samadhi one attains the Knowledge of Brahman—one realizes Brahman. In that state reasoning stops altogether, and man becomes mute. He has no power to describe the nature of Brahman' (102–3). To illustrate this Sri Ramakrishna gave the allegory of a salt doll: 'A salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. ... It wanted to tell others how deep the water was. But this it could never do, for no sooner did it get into the water than it melted. Now who was there to report the ocean's depth?' (103).

Sri Ramakrishna said that an expert dancer cannot take a wrong step, or an expert musician

cannot play a wrong note. In other words, if one wants to realize Brahman or to know what Truth is, one cannot be dishonest or hypocritical. Therefore, to reach the state of samadhi, in which an aspirant becomes one with Truth, he or she has to practise the moral discipline of being truthful. Let us reiterate that Truth is the beginning and end of everything; it is both the means and the end of spirituality. Truth alone triumphs, never untruth. Truth is the way and also the goal of life.

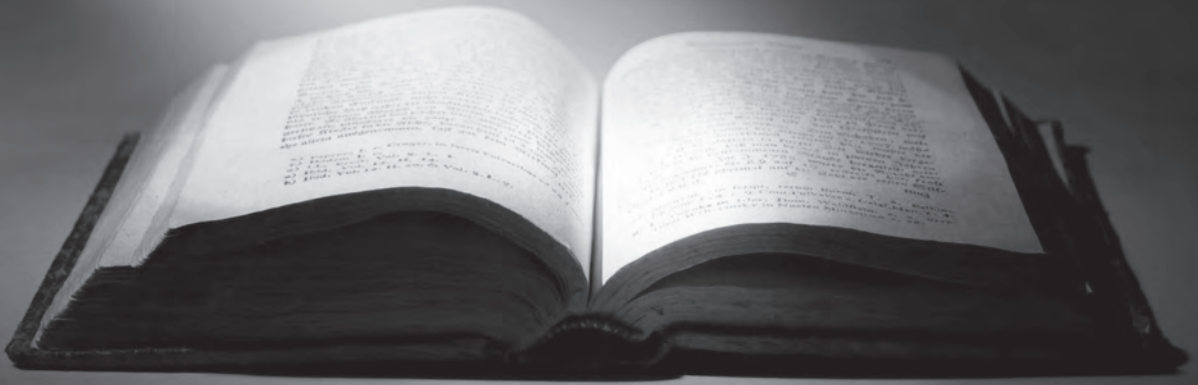


Notes and References

1. *Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.1.6.
2. See Acharya Shankara's commentary on *Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.1.6.
3. Kamala Subramaniam, *Mahabharata* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2001), 444.
4. Tulasidas, *Ramcharitmas*, 2.27.2.
5. See *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 4.4.1–5.
6. See Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1979), 86.
7. M, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 312.
8. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 2.84.
9. Oscar Wilde, 'A Woman of no Importance'; see *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), 568.
10. See Steve Rockefeller, *John Dewey, Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University, 1991), 417–18.
11. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 2.4.5.
12. *Manu Smriti*, 4.138.
13. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 1.456.
14. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.1.1.
15. *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 6.8.7.
16. *Complete Works*, 2.78.
17. M K Gandhi, *My Religion* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1955), 104.
18. *Rig Veda*, 1.164.46.
19. *Gospel*, 867.

Prolegomenon to the Study of Evil

Subhasis Chattopadhyay



Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.¹

WE HAVE SIMPLY TURNED our backs to the reality of evil in us and in our midst. When a woman is brutally gang raped we name her *nirbhaya*, fearless, and choose to forget the raw terror, trauma, and final death she underwent. Instead of seeing how Hitler and his fanatical followers exterminated Jews, of how Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge killed Cambodians, of how various despots and dictators advocated and perpetrated evil, we gloss over the horrific facts and praise the human spirit that rises victorious from the evil that surrounds it.

Many ‘help yourself’ and ‘feel good’ books as well as talks on similar issues make us believe

that to think of evil is bad, is demeaning and not worthy of a good conversation. Who wants to talk of child abuse in our homes day after day, of ‘nowhere children’ living in the streets, of the nights of terror for the helpless, of human degradation? Who wants to talk of the way we love beating our spouses, of exhibitionism, of fetishes, of the need to destroy, break, murder, and create mayhem?

In philosophy classes throughout the world hardly any professor wants to lecture on the reality of shame, social ostracism, or compulsion to compromise and take bribes. What socialist wants to talk of the selfishness and greed for power that drives many of humankind’s actions? Psychologists dismiss evil with the convenient shroud of clinical jargon; they describe a real evil in terms of neuropsychiatric models where neurotransmitters are our internal gods or—for

example, instead of demanding the harshest punishments for child abusers, they see abuse as just another ‘-philia.’ This stance may even reduce the culpability of the abuser. The media, by portraying hyperbolic images of evil makes us forget that lesser existential crimes are also evil. Certain social literature considers that everything is relative and, consequently, all things are equal. In short, it is unfashionable today to talk of evil.

Doubts in the Heart

Do you feel lonely? You may have been happily married for years and yet, while you cosily count your blessings at night, do you hear a torturous emptiness within? If you are a celibate, do you not feel shame and guilt by sexual fantasies created by a raging libido? Does it fill you with remorse to cheat and lie and deceive the helpless and weak? Have yours and others’ wrongdoings blunted your sensibility, killing something essential in you? Maybe you feel betrayed by those you loved and cherished. Where have your youthful glory, power, and dreams gone? Do you revel in the unhappiness of others? Is it possible you secretly gloat that your child fared better in the examinations than your neighbour’s or the boss’s kid? Is it just possible that you love the sight of the young girl you saw on the street the other day?

The Marquis de Sade (1740–1814) was not totally wrong when he praised and associated violence with pleasure. The body-mind complex is the vehicle of the soul, and the soul careens and stumbles along our innumerable and uncontrollable desires and compulsions, no matter how much we try to avoid them. These desires keep resurfacing in different forms over and over again. Psychoanalysts have been proved right, empirically at least, and hence the profession still exists. The subconscious, spoken a century and more ago by Sigmund Freud, has only been

scratched on the surface; what more lies below no one knows.

Is it that you feel that folks around you should be a bit up to your standards of punctuality and ethics? Has the good God appointed you to uphold the declining morals of this world? Or is it that you get a kick from intellectual frippery? Or is it that you are just in the wrong place among the wrong people who simply are too stupid to understand you? In Swami Vivekananda’s words:

We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable, we say, ‘Oh, the world is a devil’s world.’ We curse others and say, ‘What infatuated fools!’ But why should we be in such a world, if we really are so good? If this is a devil’s world, we must be devils also; why else should we be here? ‘Oh, the people of the world are so selfish!’ True enough; but why should we be found in that company, if we be better? Just think of that.²

No book has the answer to all these questions. This is the way things are: we are ambitious till we die, sensual till we die, unhappy and lonely till we die. And accepting this still brings more questions: If God is so good, powerful, present everywhere at once, why even in her lila does she allow us to feel the need to be violent, to rape, abuse, kill, or feel abject and deserted? Why is it that two persons born at the same time or from the same womb have so very different lives? And if there is karma, what propelled the first wrongdoer in creation to err? And if, as according to Advaita Vedanta, all things are One, then why does that One allow painful diversity, or the covering of the mirror of the soul that we see a snake where there is only a rope? Why does

the Infinite allow abuse, deaths by mutilation, and pogroms? What if you have no job, or your near ones are suffering from terminal illnesses, or schizophrenia, or a bipolar disorder runs in your family? This is what is known as 'the problem of evil'. When Swami Vivekananda's father passed away, plunging the family into grief and penury, Swamiji never lost faith in the existence of God. But one day when his mother heard him repeating God's name, as he habitually did, she said: 'Hush, you fool! you have been crying yourself hoarse for God from your childhood, and what has He done for you?'³ He was 'stung to the quick', as he put it, and all the questions mentioned above cropped up in his heart.

The truth is that people, animals, insects, reptiles, and plants live and die painfully. We conveniently projected evil upon Satan and blamed him and his hordes for it. Today there is no Satan to help us, and we find ourselves up to our necks in evil. When we say that pain is necessary for spiritual growth, what we generally mean is that pain is necessary for the spiritual growth of *others*. It is one thing to think that everything is *maya*, to believe that everything is God's holy will, and it is quite another thing to be insecure, terminally ill, old, abandoned by one's children, and to have no sight of God or Brahman anywhere. From all this we can understand that evil is subjective as well as objective.

Good and Evil

The twentieth century has been marked by wars, pillage, and untold human suffering. Gun-runners team up with drug cartels and traffickers of blood diamonds. These powerful forces are in the hands of other more powerful forces: governments and global criminal or financial networks. It was a century of genocide, and yet the real problem, the only problem endures, tormenting us with the rhetorical

question: Where did evil go? The answer is: *everywhere*. In a society that seeks to concern itself solely with the discourse on the good, evil has metamorphosed into all the viral and terroristic forms that engulf us. All religions mimetically represent for us that lost discourse on evil, interrogating how this evil is established here in the domain of the seeing. The academic study of this problem has been on the wane, both within secular academe and within the Catholic Church, since 'evil [poses] an epistemological problem, highly ambiguous in origins, intractable, and woven into a net of other religious, philosophical, and political issues.'⁴ 'To insist that evil is demonic is not only to insist that it is fundamentally mysterious, but thereby to relegate it to religion, rather than to politics.'⁵ Through this approach the problem can never be located within the established domains of philosophical and theological narratives. Yet it is urgent that we comprehend evil as neither being imposed on human beings by something outside nor it being an inscrutable component of a larger design for evil. One explanation can be this: 'Evil results from the dialectical interaction between the practices human beings develop in our attempts to improve our lot and the basic characteristics that naturally define us as human individuals.'⁶

There is a necessity to recapitulate the history of ideas, which locates evil as a central problem within our lives and even within spirituality. This meta-narrative of evil mirrors other narratives of power and abjection. Thus, a cultural study of evil will expose the processes that are verifiable by ideological and historical registers. It is necessary to refer to evolutionary, forensic, and cultural branches of psychiatry to demystify evil, for 'we may well ask whether man has a legacy of aggressive orientations, transmitted in some perplexing ways through

his genes, his hormones, his brain, and his customs.⁷ If we are to understand evil as real, it is important to establish it within the field of intelligibility, informed by the enlightened discourse on the empirical sciences.

Yet, the triumph of evil is not the assumed *telos* of history within the traditions of theodicy. Aristotle, for instance, sees humans struggling for *eudaimonia*, happiness, achievable when one actively chooses the good over the bad. Earlier Plato had commented on what constitutes goodness and the good life. The Greek discourse on the good was later appropriated by the Judeo-Christian tradition, which values the triumph of the good, with the 'idea of the holy',⁸ and the belief in the messianic role of Jesus Christ. History was understood as informed by a Personal God, and Christ became the model for future evaluations of the good. This good is expressed within the domains of history and fiction as a gesture towards cosmopolitanism, hospitality, and the revaluation of the Darwinian man as *homo sacer*.

On what condition is responsibility possible? On the condition that the Good no longer be a transcendental objective, a relation between objective things, but the relation to the other, a response to the other; an experience of personal goodness and a movement of intention. That supposes, as we have seen, a double rupture: both with orgiastic mystery and with Platonism. On what condition does goodness exist beyond all calculation? On the condition that goodness forget itself, that the movement be a movement of the gift that renounces itself, hence a movement of infinite love. Only infinite love can renounce itself and, in order to become finite, become incarnated in order to love the other, to love the other as a finite other.⁹

Since it is now clear that 'the good as a transcendental notion has a certain complexity',¹⁰ being continuously assailed by the factuality of

evil, it is legitimate to interrogate it within theology and philosophy. Unless we identify evil, we are doomed to repeating the Shoah,¹¹ the abuses, rapes, and so on and never get rid of our own loneliness, our own failures to communicate. To study evil is to reaffirm the existence of God and love.

Swamiji's Experience

Evil has puzzled and mystified humankind and has sapped all its energy. It has made us forget our inherent Divinity. I would like to conclude this piece on evil by citing one of Swamiji's experiences:

One evening, after a whole day's fast and exposure to rain I was returning home with tired limbs and a jaded mind; overpowered with exhaustion and unable to move a step forward, I sank down on the outer plinth of a house by the roadside. I can't say whether I was insensible for a time or not. Various thoughts crowded in on my mind, and I was too weak to drive them off and fix my attention on anything in particular. Suddenly I felt as if by some divine power the coverings of my soul were being removed one after another. All my former doubts regarding the coexistence of divine justice and mercy, and the presence of misery in the creation of a Blissful Providence, were automatically solved. By a deep introspection I found the meaning of it all and was satisfied. As I proceeded homewards I found there was no trace of fatigue in the body, and the mind was refreshed with wonderful strength and peace. The night was well-nigh over.¹²

The only way to overcome evil is to attain to Truth, or the Reality, which is within us. Evil thoughts, words, and deeds, cover the Truth, and this covering makes us d-evils. This devil has to be extinguished by great vigilance and discernment.

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Vikramshila: An Ancient Seat of Education

Dr Alpana Ghose



Front view of the Vikramshila monastery

INDIA HAS A RICH TRADITION of learning and education that was handed over generation after generation, first orally and later through writing. Swami Vivekananda says: ‘Every boy and girl was sent to the university, where they studied until their twentieth or thirtieth year.’¹ Much later, apart from the scriptures, the approach to learning was generally to study logic and epistemology. The study of logic was followed by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains.²

In ancient India the main subject was the Vedas. The Vedangas, subjects auxiliary to the Vedas, as well as the performance of elaborate yajnas had also to be mastered. The teacher would instruct a handful of seated students for many hours daily in the *gurukula*, house of the guru. They first had to memorize and repeat the Vedic mantras and then were taught their esoteric meanings. To ensure correctness of memory the hymns were taught in more than one way. Students would attain mastery of at least one of the four Vedas. In the *gurukulas* the young

students stayed with the guru for many years, helping him in his daily chores. The guru’s wife became their surrogate mother. There is mention of many *gurukulas* in the Upanishads—famous among them were those of Yajnavalkya and Varuni. A well-known discourse on Brahman found in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* is said to have taken place in Varuni’s *gurukula*. *Gurukulas* were supported by royal as well as public donations. After the *upanayana*, initiation into the study of the Vedas, children between the ages of five to twelve, became *brahmacharis*. These students remained unmarried till they were about twenty-five, or even later. In pre-Buddhist India students generally belonged to the three upper castes—brahmana, kshatriya, and vaishya.

Around 500 BCE Buddhism spread in India and with it a new educational system. Buddhism was a protest against the orthodox Vedic religion. Swami Vivekananda said: ‘Without the Buddhist revolution what would have delivered the suffering millions of the lower classes from the violent

tyrannies of the influential higher castes?’³ However, Swamiji did not put aside Vedic thought, as for him ‘the essence of Buddhism was all borrowed from the same Upanishads; even the ethics, the so-called great and wonderful ethics of Buddhism, were there word for word, in some one or other of the Upanishads’ (3.230).

In Buddhist India monasteries became the centres of learning and education. During the classical period of Indian history the Palas, who were Buddhists, ruled from Bengal between 750 to 1174 CE. This dynasty supported art and education and the universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila. The students in these universities had to follow monastic rules along with their syllabus, and they were classified according to merit. The period of education was twelve years. The teachers were the guardians of the students. They were responsible for the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual development of the students. Initially, stress was given on the study of various scriptures. In a later period, and according to the demands of society, professional education—art, sculpture, architecture, medicine—were also

included in the syllabus. The student’s mother tongue was the original medium of teaching; later Pali and Prakrit were introduced, and much later Sanskrit as well. In fact, Vedic topics were also added to the syllabus.

The monasteries that served as centres of education later developed into colleges and universities. Nalanda, Vikramshila, Somapura, Salban, and Takshashila, or Taxila, became unparalleled universities with highly qualified teachers. The aim of Buddhist education was to make a human being wise, intelligent, moral, and non-violent. Students became judicious, humanists, logical, and free from superstitions, as well as free from greed, lust, and ignorance—an integral education that can ultimately lead a person to nirvana. Buddhist education was open and available to people of all walks of life. Although a small number of students studied under a single teacher, students from China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Gandhara in Afghanistan came here to study. Later these universities were preferred by students and scholars from all over the known world. Ancient Indian education contributed a lot to the growth

*A Buddhist monk
teaching novices*



of education in medieval times. The stress was now on the elements of innovation and an incentive to improve traditional knowledge.

Famous men connected with Taxila were Panini, the grammarian of the fifth or fourth century BCE; Kautilya, the brahmana minister of Chandragupta Maurya; and Charaka, one of the two leading authorities on Indian medical sciences.⁴ Taxila was famous for the teaching of grammar, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Nalanda and Vikramshila, the two other great universities that grew up during the Pala dynasty, were called Maha Viharas, 'Great Monasteries'. Vikramshila was the premier university of the era and one of the two most important centres of Buddhist learning in India, along with Nalanda.

Origins and Structure

The Vikramshila university was established by King Dharmapala in the eighth century AD and grew to become the intellectual centre for tantric Buddhism. In the beginning of the eleventh century AD, during the reign of King Ramapala, India was passing through a transitory phase called the early medieval period. The great dynasties were gradually giving way to the invaders from the West. The age was no longer the Golden Age. Political and social values were crumbling, as was the hold of the central political authority. This was the political setting when Dharmapala established Vikramshila university on the banks of the river Ganga in Magadha—now near Bhagalpur. The university was governed by a joint board of scholars.⁵

Vikramshila ruins





*Ruins of Vikramshila's
bathing place*

Atisha Dipankara Srijnan (982–1052 CE), the renowned pundit, played a pivotal role in establishing it as a centre of education. He was later responsible for spreading Buddhism in Tibet.

Vikramshila is known to us mainly through Tibetan sources, especially the writings of Taranatha, the Tibetan historian-monk of the sixteenth–seventeenth century AD. The entire campus was circular in structure, spread out within a radius of nearly 150 miles. There were 53 rooms meant for Tantric practices, another 54 for general use, and 17 monastic cells opening onto the verandas. Vikramshila got to have more than one hundred teachers and about one thousand students. Highly qualified teachers were called *dvarapalas*, who used to sit at the gates to conduct the entrance test of the students seeking admission. The university had four such gates on the east, west, north, and south. Four eminent teachers of four different subjects were posted at the gates and they interviewed the students seeking admission. Subjects like philosophy, grammar, metaphysics, Indian logic, among others, were taught there.

The centre of the university once had a huge temple, adorned with a life-size copy of

the Mahabodhi Tree. It is said that approximately one hundred and eight temples were constructed around it. Out of these, almost fifty-three were dedicated to the study of the Guhyasamaja Tantra. The entrance of the main temple stood guarded by two life-size statues of Nagarjuna and Atisha Dipankara. The university produced many eminent scholars who were often invited to foreign countries to spread Buddhist learning, culture, and religion. Vikramshila prospered for about four centuries and then was destroyed, along with other major centres, by Bakhtiyar Khilji during the wars with the Sena dynasty.

Ruins and Restoration

At present only ruins of the ancient Vikramshila can be seen at the village Antichak, about 50 km east of Bhagalpur, Bihar, and about 13 km north-east of Kahalgaon—a railway station on the Bhagalpur-Sahebganj section of the Eastern Railway. It is approachable through a 11 km long motorable road diverting from NH 80 at Anadipur, about 2 km from Kahalgaon. Vikramshila also lies very close to Champanagar, another famous Buddhist destination in Bihar.



Main stupa in the centre of the square monastery

The remains of the ancient university have been partially excavated, and the process is still underway. Meticulous excavation at the site was conducted initially by Patna University during 1960–69 and subsequently by the Archaeological Survey of India during 1972–82. It has revealed a huge square monastery with a cruciform stupa in its centre, a library building, and cluster of stupas. To the north of the monastery a number of scattered structures including a Tibetan and a Hindu temple have been found. The entire ruins are spread over an area of more than one hundred acres.

The monastery, or residence for the Buddhist monks, is a huge square structure, each side measuring 330 metres and having a series of 208 cells, 52 on each of the four sides opening onto a common veranda. A few brick-arched underground chambers beneath some of the cells have

also been noticed, which were probably meant for solitary meditation by the monks.


The main stupa, built for the purpose of worship, is a brick structure laid in mud mortar that stands in the centre of the square monastery. This two-terraced stupa is cruciform on plan and about 15 meters high from the ground level, accessible through a flight of steps on the north side. On each of the four cardinal directions there is a protruding chamber with a pillared antechamber and a separate pillared mandapa in front. In the four chambers of the stupa were placed colossal stuccoed images of the seated Buddha, of which three were found in situ and the remaining one, on the north side, was possibly replaced by a stone image after the clay image was somehow damaged.

The walls of both the terraces were decorated with mouldings and terracotta plaques, which testify the high excellence of terracotta art that

flourished in the region during the Pala period. Over the plaques are depicted many Buddhist deities like Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, Maitreya, Marichi, Tara and scenes related to Buddhism, in addition to some social scenes and a few Hindu deities like Vishnu, Parvati, Ardhanarishvara, and Hanuman.

About 32 meters south of the monastery on its south-west corner and attached to the main monastery through a narrow corridor is a rectangular structure identified as a library building. It was air-conditioned by cooled water from the adjoining reservoir through a range of vents in the back wall. The system was perhaps meant for preserving delicate manuscripts.

A large number of antiquities of different materials, unearthed from this place in the course of excavation, are displayed in the site museum maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.⁶

Vikramshila was neglected for years, which contributed to extensive damages to the monument. The Archaeological Survey of India is now planning to develop the excavated site of this ancient university. From the year 2009 there has been considerable work in maintaining and beautifying the place to attract tourism. 

Notes and References

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*Wall carvings of
Vikramshila's terraces*



Advaita Vedanta and the Big Bang

Vikram H Zaveri

MANY SCIENTISTS have discussed consciousness from a quantum mechanics perspective. They have dealt with individual consciousness and its role in the collapse of the 'wave function' during quantum measurement experiments. Some authors have also mentioned about the universal consciousness and its connection with the individual consciousness. A few physicists have discussed 'quantum consciousness parameter' and 'fractal consciousness' in different life forms. According to some, consciousness might have a cosmic origin with roots in pre-consciousness, ingrained directly from the Planck time, and the universe might have achieved consciousness at the end of inflation. There are physicists who restate the mind-body relation, by using the brain duplication argument, to suggest that the interdependence of the brain with the physical world gives rise to consciousness. The incompatibility between self-observing consciousness and the standard axioms of quantum theory has been reviewed. Some scientists mention that the encounter of physics with consciousness has no likely practical consequences for physics but for something beyond physics, which is metaphysics.

As per the current understanding in physical and life sciences, all these studies and thoughts maintain a strict distinction between consciousness and matter; the former is considered sentient and the later insentient. There are some physicists who propose a rudimentary degree of consciousness in fundamental particles. Advaita Vedanta proposes that the infinite indivisible absolute Consciousness is the only existence and

reality: 'Brahman is Existence, Knowledge, Infinity; pure, supreme, self-existent, eternal, and indivisible Bliss; not different from the individual soul, and devoid of interior or exterior.'¹

Many people are of the opinion that the existence of consciousness in this universe is a reality and the Big Bang theory cannot be considered complete till it can account for the presence of consciousness along with other forms of insentient matter. In this article we will look at consciousness from the quantum as well as astrophysical and cosmological perspectives.

The Unmanifest

In some advanced mathematical theories the space-time continuum connecting two points gets completely obliterated, and the resulting sub-quantum medium resembles a black hole singularity. Such a singularity suggests a state of equilibrium of primal energy devoid of ripples, which we shall call 'unmanifest' energy. This, however, is not a very accurate description of the Unmanifest of Advaita Vedanta, which cannot be described as energy because there are no oscillations in it—the Unmanifest is motionless, whereas energy is always associated with oscillations. Hence, a better way to put this is to say that the Unmanifest is something that gives rise to both energy and oscillations, which are the two faces of the same coin. When one face disappears, the other also disappears. Since the Unmanifest is not energy, it does not gravitate. Similarly, vibrating energy and space-time are two faces of the same coin. When the vibrating energy disappears, the space-time superimposed

on it disappears as well. Then, is the Unmanifest a perfect vacuum? Again, the answer is no, because the Unmanifest is not nothingness. The Bhagavadgita says: 'With the coming of day [creation] all manifested things emerge from the Unmanifest, and when night [dissolution] comes they merge in that itself, which is called the Unmanifest.'² But how do you describe the Unmanifest? The Unmanifest can only be described by negation. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'The jnani, sticking to the path of knowledge, always reasons about the Reality, saying, "Not this, Not this". Brahman is neither "this" nor "that".'³ That is, you keep asking whether it is this or that, and the answer is always no, because it is one of a kind and there is nothing else to compare it with in the universe.

Therefore, this repose of the equilibrium state of the Unmanifest is disturbed when the initial vibration sets off a chain reaction of creative processes. Following the first vibration in the Unmanifest, several subtle and yet undetected forms of energy may have been created. Eventually, a certain gross form of vibrating energy of a very unified, fundamental, and primal kind becomes manifest.

Time begins with the first vibration. The concept of proper time assumes linear time and distance scales, whereas the true nature of Reality is founded upon non-linear periods and also wavelengths of subatomic particles. Nevertheless, to deal with the compound wave of a massive object such as the planet Earth is not as simple as analysing an individual particle. Thus the concept of proper time is useful in such cases as an approximation.

Energy and vibrations are not independent entities. Nowhere in the observable universe can one find any form of energy that is not in a state of vibration. The analogy of the oneness of the waves and the ocean should suffice to explain the

phenomenon. Swami Vivekananda says: 'In the ocean we cannot raise a wave without causing a hollow somewhere else.'⁴ Another conclusion is that space and energy are equivalent. There is nothing like 'empty space'. All space is either filled with vibrating energy or with unmanifest energy in equilibrium. One cannot conceive of space without associating it with some form of energy. In other words, Einstein's space-time is merely an artefact superimposed on vibrating energy, which is the only real substance.

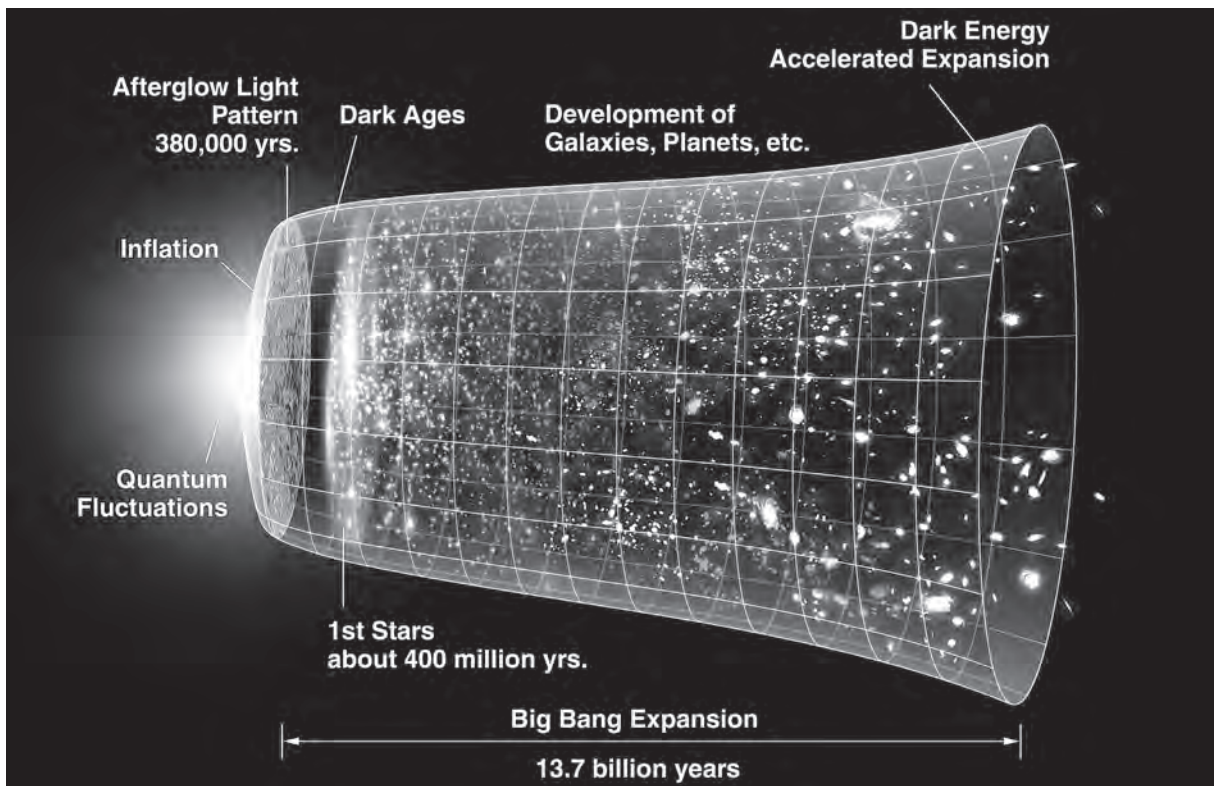
The Unmanifest cannot be detected by any instrument and can only be described by negation. Therefore, the perfect description of the Unmanifest is not possible. It is like trying to describe the taste of sugar. Describing the taste is one thing and experiencing it is an altogether different thing. At this point we simply say that even though it is not possible to describe or experimentally detect the Unmanifest, it is however possible to experience it.

Indivisible Consciousness

We begin with a proposition: the Unmanifest is absolute, indivisible, infinite, and like a motionless ocean of pure Consciousness in which there is no vibration. This indivisible Consciousness is formless, has no boundaries, is the only thing that existed before the universe was created and therefore is one without a second. 'That which though one only, is the cause of the many; which refutes all other causes, but is itself without cause; distinct from maya and its effects, the universe; and independent—that Brahman are thou.'⁵ This ocean of Consciousness is all-knowing because prior to the creation of the universe there was nothing else for it to know other than itself. This ocean of Consciousness is also blissful because unmanifest Consciousness and bliss are not two separate things. This ocean of Consciousness is called unmanifest

because it is not manifest to the human senses of the observer—this of course does not mean that it does not exist. When viewed through the human senses this Unmanifest appears as empty space, hence it can be described as Satchidananda—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. We call this ‘absolute’ because in the presence of any other thing there would be relativity. Therefore, it is beyond space and time, and the laws of relativity fail at the level of the Unmanifest. In general the Unmanifest does not interact with any form of manifest energy, hence it does not gravitate or collide even with neutrinos. Due to this aloofness, the hot Big Bang or massive supernovas do not affect the Unmanifest, which cannot be detected by any means. This Unmanifest does not go anywhere, because it has no place to go; nor does it come from anywhere, because it is ever present everywhere. Coming and going is for the waves, not for the ocean. Hence it is immovable

and cannot be evaluated. Since the Unmanifest is free from any vibrations, it cannot be represented by any mathematical function. It is neither uni-dimensional nor multidimensional, as there are no directions in it. Directions appear with the appearance of the wave—that is force. When the electromagnetic, weak, strong, and gravitational forces are united, the result is another fundamental wave with finite energy and finite frequency, which can be easily represented; but this is not a description of the Unmanifest. The Unmanifest is neither micro nor macro, because it cannot be established in relation to a second entity. The strings, in string theory, cannot be fundamental building blocks of the universe, because if discovered there is always a chance that it can be further divided, and this is not the case with the indivisible infinite Consciousness. This Unmanifest has the potential of becoming anything and everything that exists in the manifest universe.



Discrete Quanta of Consciousness

Creation begins when the indivisible ocean of Consciousness oscillates by its own power and makes waves. There is no other cause that causes these first oscillations, as is mentioned in the 'Nasadiya Sukta' of the Rig Veda. So now we make the second proposition, that this process of oscillation causes the quantization of the indivisible Consciousness into seemingly discrete quanta of consciousness, which is but an appearance presented to the human senses because Consciousness ever remains indivisible. This is where the wave-particle duality comes into the picture. The particle nature presents an apparent multiplicity, while the wave nature indicates indivisibility. The degree of manifestation of consciousness in the discrete quanta is relatively low compared to the motionless Unmanifest, and thus energy is born. This energy is nothing but consciousness in waves or consciousness in motion. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'Waves begin to rise: the Relative rises from the Absolute; the causal, subtle, and gross bodies appear out of the Great Cause; waves arising from the Great Ocean merge again in the Great Ocean.'⁶ Due to the discreteness of the quanta, Consciousness presents an appearance of multiplicity. Thus the one becomes many, and the laws of relativity become operative. With the appearance of the wave, space-time makes its appearance. Similarly, the force and the directions make their first appearance simultaneously with the first oscillation.

'Beginning' invariably refers to time, and vibrations are invariably associated with what we call frequency. And frequency is the inverse of the period of the wave—the period measures the time between two successive events. Therefore, mathematically speaking, frequency (f) is equal to the reciprocal of the period (T) ($f=1/T$). It is not yet fully recognized that this is the only

fundamental and basic expression, which relates the otherwise arbitrary conception of time with the objective world. The concept of time as adopted by Einstein's relativity and Newton's classical mechanics assumes that time is linear and flows in one direction—from past to present and to the future. This prevailing concept of time moving in one direction is a self-imposed illusion of the mind.

Following the first vibration in the Unmanifest, several subtle energies with a high degree of manifestation of consciousness and the entire subtle universe, unknown to present-day physics, may have been created. Eventually, certain gross forms of vibrating energy of a very unified, fundamental, and primal kind with a very low degree of consciousness becomes manifest, such that each quanta appears as though it is insentient.

As quantization of consciousness progresses, it also undergoes condensation, in steps, during a transition phase, as recognised in particle physics. This makes the visible universe appear, to the senses of the observer, out of the nothingness of empty space. This is like one single expanse of water with blocks of ice formed here and there, which presents apparent multiplicity but in reality it is just one single expanse of water. In the same way, Consciousness remains undivided despite the appearance of multiplicity in the visible universe. The relation between Consciousness and energy is comparable to that between water and ice.

Individual Consciousness

Since the advent of the cell theory the scientific community, and in fact everyone, has recognized the cell as the basic unit of life. But when it comes to viruses, genes, and other self-replicating molecules, such consensus does not exist among scientists.

A simplest tobacco mosaic virus contains about 5,250,000 atoms. Each atom has its own mass, and as per mass-energy equivalence, a virus is made of energy, which is consciousness in waves. But even at the level of a virus the degree of manifestation of consciousness is so low that it becomes difficult to decide whether the virus has life. This difficulty arises mainly because of the definition of life adopted by present-day scientists, more than anything else. Here we propose a more common-sense definition of life. In order to determine whether a person is alive we do not say 'Let us see whether he can reproduce' or 'Let us see whether he can use his intelligence', we simply check his heart to see whether it is beating—if it does, he is alive. Therefore, the most fundamental, basic, and general definition of life is primarily associated with oscillations. Even the brain works according to oscillations. Hence we declare that whatever oscillates has life. This immediately endows all the energies of the universe with life, because energy is always associated with oscillations.

There is one similarity between individual consciousness and energy: both are seen to have myriad forms and names. Our experience with individual consciousness is restricted to the planet Earth, but with energy it is universal. We say that life on Earth could not be possible without certain carbons, amino acids, light, air, and water. How can something insentient make so much difference to life forms? We do recognize some differences in the consciousness of humans, animals, birds, insects, and plants, which can be explained in terms of the degree of manifestation of consciousness—the atoms and particles can fall on the lower end of this scale. Under these circumstances the elementary consciousness of the particle itself can play some role in the collapse of the wave function. Hence a superposition of frequencies might be resolved by the conscious observation of one of them.

The vast difference between the consciousness of matter and that of the living beings is due to the following reasons. The Unmanifest is taken to be a *jiva*, individual soul, and for the time being it appears to be bound within a limited body made of matter; the *jiva* is thus mistaken to be the Self and the rest of the universe is considered to be the non-Self. This division is possible due to the emergence of ego, which is the 'I' consciousness in every living being.

Here we have two manifest aspects of the Unmanifest. The first is the lower aspect, which we call nature, and the second is the higher aspect, which we call individual soul. 'O mighty-armed one, this is the inferior (*Prakriti*). Know the other *Prakriti* of Mine, which is higher than this, which has taken the form of *jivas*, and by which this world is upheld.'⁷ All beings are born from the mixing of these two. The mind, the intellect, and the ego are part of the lower nature. The *jiva*, due to ignorance, performs actions and experiences pairs of opposites such as happiness and misery, heat and cold, and so on. When knowledge dawns, the *jiva* finds itself beyond all karma and as the observer of the universe. This is the observer of general relativity.

Hence we conclude that to be alive and to be conscious are two different things. When we say that matter or energy is alive, it may not have much to do with consciousness, because the higher aspect of the Unmanifest is missing. The same thing can be observed in case of an unconscious man whose heart may be beating. Therefore, the sentient and the insentient can be defined as life with consciousness and life without consciousness respectively—the cell can be considered the smallest unit of life with consciousness.

Since our theory proposes one indivisible Consciousness in the entire universe, all the observed individual consciousness behind various

life forms must have some connection with this infinite indivisible Consciousness and therefore it must be possible to experience such an indivisible state of consciousness. This must also be the cause behind the common experience of different beings with respect to the observed phenomena or objects in the universe. For example, when one person sees a cow, others also see a cow in that animal and not a donkey.

When the infinite motionless Consciousness becomes active—creating, preserving, and destroying—it acts like energy; when it remains inactive, it becomes the Unmanifest. It is possible to realize the oneness of individual consciousness and the infinite indivisible Consciousness. Consciousness and energy are like milk and its whiteness, fire and its power to burn, the ocean and its waves, which cannot be separated. The entire manifest universe arises out of the infinite indivisible Consciousness, like blocks of ice in an ocean that present apparent multiplicity in a single expanse of water. The observer's perception of the entire universe is due to mistaking the absolute for the relative, just like mistaking a rope for a snake—in the typical example given in Vedanta. As long as false perception persists, Consciousness appears as insentient, and the relative universe appears real.⁸ ❧

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Vivekananda's Impact on the World of Ideas

Dr Satish K Kapoor

(Continued from the previous issue)

BROADLY SPEAKING, humanism concerns itself with human interests and ideals, affirms a person's autonomy and the supremacy of reason. Humanism was the ideology of the European Renaissance, which diverted the attention from God to the study of humankind. The Enlightenment that followed spurned religious and traditional authority and emphasized reason instead of faith, experience instead of dogma, and scepticism instead of blind belief. With the passage of time these ideals proliferated into many areas such as arts, natural science, literature, religion, philosophy, and economics. All this empowered individuals. Humanism focussed on Jeremy Bentham's idea of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.'

Spiritual Humanism

Vivekananda gradually influenced the discourse on humanism, as he added a spiritual dimension to it—he accepted humanism but did not discard faith. Faith is not an amalgam of illogical beliefs or presumptions; it is an inherent quality of the soul that needs awakening. Vedanta considers that faith is the reaffirmation of the unity of existence. Existence cannot be viewed in anthropocentric terms, because all life is one. The welfare of an individual lies in the welfare of others. Vivekananda's humanism does not merely confine itself to humans and their immediate or long-term interests, but it is also concerned with the human impact on the world around. Inner environmental degradation is dangerous and leads to outer pollution.

The emphasis laid by René Descartes, David Hume, and other thinkers on rationality, scepticism, and empiricism led many people away from spirituality. Seeking divine grace was considered primitive. On the other hand, Vivekananda's humanism aimed at resuscitating faith in the highest ideals so that humans could broaden their vision, see Divinity in one and in others, and develop the natural quality of feeling for others, which, according to him, helps 'growing in oneness'.⁵³ He said: 'Feel like Christ, and you will be a Christ; feel like Buddha and you will be a Buddha' (ibid.). An intellect without feelings dries the personality, just as feeling without intelligence debilitates one's *viveka*, discernment. Vivekananda established a relation between faith and reason, thought and feeling, humanity and Divinity.

Vivekananda's humanism has nothing in common with Marxism. It does not believe in class-struggles or violence to achieve social justice. This new humanism is possible through mutual human concern and feeling. It is not opposed to the development of science and technology, but believes in divinizing human tendencies so that humankind is not endangered by unethical practices through science and technology. It aims at the ascent of humankind to God and rejects the cynical propositions of some humanists who proclaim the death of God.

Vivekananda's humanism is trifoliate—it links humans with humans, humans with nature, and humans with God. He was perhaps the first to use the word *daridra-narayana*, and exhorted all to see *narayana*, God, in the poor and

lowly *daridra*. God, to him, was the sum of all souls: 'Where should you go to seek for God—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganga? Believe in the omnipotent power of love' (5.51). He deprecated the educated and the rich for ignoring the downtrodden classes and asked them to find out ways and means to ameliorate their lot. Vivekananda's humanism transcends the boundaries of caste, creed, and nationality, and his ardour in this respect made him write: 'I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, "*Vasantavallokahitam charantah*—Doing good to others (silently) like the spring"—this is my religion' (7.486–7). Sri Aurobindo says: 'Vivekananda drawn by the Absolute, feels also the call of the disguised Godhead in humanity ... the call of the fallen and the suffering, the call of the Self to the self in the obscure body of the universe.'⁵⁴

Protagoras (c.490–20 BCE) said: 'Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that are, and of things which are not, that they are not.'⁵⁵ But Vivekananda went far ahead of the Greek philosopher by saying: 'Man himself is the All. I cannot know the fundamental reality because I am that fundamental reality.'⁵⁶

Cosmology and Cosmogony

Theories about the origin and evolution of the universe have been many and varied—from the creation of the world in six days to the Big Bang and the inflationary theory of recent times. In olden days the only authority regarding the world and creation was religion. In Europe any theory going against settled Church doctrines were termed heretic. Towards the nineteenth century science, which could no longer be suppressed, brought out scientific views of the universe. These thoughts were revolutionary and

created a great conflict among believers in the old theological interpretation of creation.

As questions about cosmology and cosmogony were commonplace in the US and Europe, Vivekananda touched upon the subject in a unique way, basing his observations mainly on Sankhya and Vedanta philosophies while also bringing in scientific theories. His view of creation roused great interest among religious and cultural groups in the West. The principles of these philosophies were startling, modern, and though seemingly counter-intuitive, were authenticated by science. Vivekananda spoke about the Indian ideas of cyclic time against the Western ideas of linear time. He also spoke of immensely long periods of time, which was shockingly new to the West. He showed that creation and evolution go on in cycles and are under the strict laws of causation. Today's scientific theories of inflationary models, nebulae clumping into stars, stars later dying to give birth to other stars, are perfectly in accord with what Vivekananda preached.

Acharya Shankara regarded creation as *maya*, or *vyavaharika satta*, empirical reality; Ramanuja and Madhvacharya deemed it real. Vivekananda argued that the world is neither real nor unreal but the 'shadow of truth' (8.30). 'Creation is eternal, without beginning or without end, the ever moving ripple in an infinite lake' (*ibid.*). 'God and creation are like two lines without end, without beginning and parallel' (5.313). 'It [creation] is, it was, and is to be' (*ibid.*). Vivekananda's view that Being is the substratum of the whole universe is in line with the Upanishads, which say: 'All these beings have *sat*, Existence, as their root. Existence is their abode. Existence is their place of merger.'⁵⁷

Although Vivekananda did not discuss in detail the various theories of creation and evolution of the universe, he felt that the Darwinian theory of evolution was not the final word on the subject. Firstly, he said that every evolution



presupposes an involution; secondly, though the species evolve through competition and the struggle of the fittest, in the higher human realm it is cooperation that makes species evolve faster. Giving a moral tilt to the argument Vivekananda observed that 'the highest evolution of man is effected through sacrifice alone.'⁵⁸ Today many of these ideas are accepted by scholars and are gaining ground even among common people. From another standpoint, Vivekananda put forth Patanjali's view that the transformation of one species into another is affected by *prakrityapurat*, in-filling of nature.⁵⁹ Here nature impels us towards perfection by changing our bodies and mind so that we can reach the goal.

Vivekananda argued that the universe was not created by an extra-cosmic God or an outside agent. 'It is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting.'⁶⁰ The primeval matter required for creation is not provided to some divine craftsman by an invisible, external, agency, but is a part

of Prakriti, which includes the whole universe and is in constant evolution and transformation.

Basing his view of the Hindu ideas of creation—rather projection—Vivekananda argued that the Vedic teachings were in consonance with the scientific laws that affirm that the sum total of the cosmic energy is the same throughout. The question 'if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy?' is answered by Vivekananda in this way: 'Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case God is sometimes potential and sometime kinetic, which would make Him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die, which is absurd. Therefore, there never was a time when there was no creation' (1.7). In another lecture delivered on 9 April 1900 in San Francisco, Vivekananda asked with sarcasm: 'Six thousand years ago God woke up from His dream and created the world [and] before that there was nothing? What was God doing then, taking a good nap?' (6.55). He argued that everything has a cause, and there never was a time when nature did not exist, because the cause has always existed either in subtle, causal, or gross form.

Evolution precedes involution and vice versa. The causal universe evolves into the subtle, the subtle into the gross, then the gross reverts to the subtle and then to the causal in a cyclic movement over and over again. The period of one manifestation of this universe is known as kalpa. At the end of each kalpa everything returns to the primal state, where it remains for a time before springing forth again. 'What becomes of all these forces, the Pranas? They are resolved back into the primal Prana, and this Prana becomes almost motionless—not entirely motionless; and that is what is described in the Vedic Sukta: "It vibrated without vibrations"—Anidavatam'

(3.399). From the amoeba to the human species life is a single unit. Accordingly, Vivekananda said: 'The little cell, which becomes afterwards the man, was simply the involved man and becomes evolved as a man' (2.208).

In the Vedas, creation is likened to a cosmic yajna, which the supreme Being performs himself. Even though Vivekananda spoke rationally about cosmology and cosmogony, at the heart of his message was the idea that this creation is divine—the body of God. His own realizations tallied with the Vedic teachings as described in the Rig Veda's 'Purusha Sukta', that the cosmos is the body of the Purusha, the primeval Being, who projects the world out of himself.⁶¹ 'From him Viraj [cosmic person] was born; again Purusha from Viraj was born. As soon as he was born, he spread eastward and westward over the earth' (10.90.5). The Purusha is presented as having thousands of heads, eyes, feet, and so on.

Vivekananda also translated into English the 'Nasadiya Sukta', Hymn of Creation, of the Rig Veda, which speaks of the unitary nature of being and non-being (10.129.1–7). The Sukta is one of the finest specimens of ancient Indian philosophical thought; its first two stanzas are as follows:

Existence was not then, nor non-existence,
The world was not, the sky beyond was
neither.
What covered the mist? Of whom was that?
What was in the depths of darkness thick?

Death was not then, nor immortality,
The night was neither separate from day.
But motionless did *That* vibrate
Alone, with Its own glory one—
Beyond *That* nothing did exist.⁶²

Reincarnation

Reincarnation—jivas passing from one body to another after death—has been debated

throughout the course of history and soundly rejected by the Abrahamic religions. The Greek philosophical word 'metempsychosis' has the same meaning, but is usually applied to the belief that human souls may be incarnated in animals.⁶³ As the subject formed part of the religious discourse of nineteenth-century US and Europe, Vivekananda spoke on it at Evanston, Des Moines, Memphis, Bay City, and other places and won accolades for his unique interpretation. Vivekananda's views on reincarnation were so novel that the *Evanston Index* of 7 October 1893 wrote that such views were not often heard in this part of the world.⁶⁴

He argued that the theory was not jargon but a fact. The main point to be decided was whether we have had a past. 'We know that we have a present and feel sure of a future. Yet how can there be a present without a past? ... The same arguments that prove that there is a future prove that there is a past. It is necessary that there should be causes other than God's will. Heredity is not able to give sufficient cause' (3.479). He further stated that some people do retain memories of past life in childhood days.

Vivekananda justified reincarnation on metaphysical and moral grounds, by bringing in the theory of karma, which explains why a person is born rich or poor, healthy or disabled. All people have different bodies, minds, capacities, morals, and so on, and it is wrong to blame God on that account, because he would then become 'a most unjust creature'.⁶⁵ Life on earth represents many stages through which the jiva has to pass in order to return to its original source, God.

The regression of souls to lower forms of existence is to exhaust the *sanchita* karma, accumulated effect of actions done in past lives. Thus the jiva travels from lower to higher planes. Vivekananda accepted the argument of the Nyaya philosophy that the experiences of life do not

wither away, and that our karma, though apparently disappeared, still remains unperceived, *adrishta*, and reappears as tendencies, *pravrittis*. A newborn looks so innocent and nice, but it has brought along the burden of karma created through many lives; these tendencies will gradually unfold as the child grows up. Rejecting the arguments of the Madhyamika Buddhists, who state that there is no permanent soul, Vivekananda stated: 'If the soul is not an individual but a combination of "Skandas" (notions), as the Madhyamikas among the Buddhists insist, still they find pre-existence absolutely necessary to explain their position.'⁶⁶

The belief in reincarnation had prevailed among 'the Alexandrian Jews imbued with the doctrine of the individual soul' (4.264). The first fathers of the Christian Church, some Arab tribes, Celtic Druids, Scythians, and even Australian aboriginals believed in the reincarnation theory of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Jesus Christ tacitly expounded this theory when he told his disciples that John the Baptist, his guru, was Elijah in his former life: 'And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, who was for to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.'⁶⁷ There are passages in the *Apocrypha* indicating that many Jews were holders of the doctrine of transmigration, and in John it seems indicated in the disciple's question: 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?'⁶⁸ The Christian Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, however, insisted that the doctrine of reincarnation should be dropped from the Bible. In 533 CE the Second Council of Constantinople declared that the doctrine of reincarnation is anathema.

The Neoplatonists regarded metempsychosis as an integral part of their doctrine. Virgil and Ovid, Roman poets, were its enthusiastic supporters. Some Christian saints accepted it as well. During the medieval age the theory of

reincarnation won a number of adherents, including Johann W Goethe, Johann G Fichte, David Hume, Gotthold E Lessing, and Friedrich W Schelling. In modern times Western thinkers like Herbert Spencer and Arthur Schopenhauer found in it a lofty explanation of life's seeming inequities.⁶⁹

Vivekananda stressed the age-old Hindu belief that one should not harm anyone, as every action would recoil as per the eternal law of cause and effect. 'You cannot injure anybody and sit quietly. It is a wonderful machinery—you cannot escape God's vengeance' (6.116). Ahimsa entails the nurturing of love for all, and the light of love ignited by sadhana dispels the darkness of anger and hatred in the human mind, making us peaceful.


A Great Reconciler

Much can be learnt from Vivekananda on different subjects. Vivekananda preached that religion, in the coming ages, cannot be divorced from any human endeavour, and that all endeavours can transform us spiritually. All so-called secular knowledge can benefit from spiritual insights and wisdom, which will transform knowledge and make it sacred.

Humanists may see in Vivekananda a modern Protagoras; while the latter stated that 'man is the measure of all things', the former said that 'no books, no scriptures, no science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man.'⁷⁰ Rationalists can find that Advaita Vedanta is not another religion or school of philosophy forcibly thrusting a belief system, but it is a practical, scientific, spiritual, and an all-encompassing way of life, which can help one achieve higher goals. Reformers can learn that society comes out of the darkness into the light, and that violent methods, denunciations, and pitting one group against another do not work.

Vivekananda's saying that each human being was like a bubble in the cosmic ocean, though a small one, in comparison with prophets or saints who were big bubbles, makes us optimistic. His observation that 'it is very good to be born in a church but it is very bad to die there' (2.39) is not sectarianism, but a pointer to the fact that human beings normally adhere to forms and ceremonies throughout their lives and fail to rise to spirituality. They do not understand that Christ and Buddha are not names, but denote the supreme state that everyone needs to attain. Vivekananda's ideas are so prolific that one can even find in them tips and insights on cooking, diet, health, travel, music, fine arts, and innumerable other things.

Vivekananda was a great reconciler. He provided a link between spirituality and science, tradition and modernity, material prosperity and spiritual ascension, intellect and intuition, the spirit of enquiry and the spirit of faith, and the best of the East and the West. He combined *sannyasa* with social work, *bhakti* with *shakti*—devotion with strength—and patriotism with an international outlook. Besides, he reconciled the three different schools of Indian philosophy—Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita—describing them as stages in spiritual development. He wanted a balance between intellect and love, mystical nature and reason, and theory and practice. His words are not ordinary but the outpourings of a prophet—they soothe and inspire, inform and educate, jolt one's complacency and deep-seated notions, and act like the surgeon's knife to dissect fears, prejudices, and complexes from the subconscious mind. Sri Aurobindo, who described Vivekananda as a *vibhuti*, spiritual splendour, like the great Acharya Shankara, observed: 'Of this freer dealing with past and present, this preservation by reconstruction, Vivekananda was in his life-time the leading exemplar and the most powerful exponent.'⁷¹

Humankind today is caught between the Scylla of plain materialism and the Charybdis of religious materialism. Organized faiths have virtually failed to inculcate simple faith and give direction. When religions have made God a commodity, can humans remain behind? We live in a world of artificiality—from our smiles and laughter to our wishing good, from our daily grind centring round food, drinks, dress, and enjoyments to our feeble prayers. While everyone talks glibly of freedom—social, economic, political, religious, and cultural—humans have enslaved themselves on all fronts, internally and externally. The 'lion' has turned into a 'lamb'! Material advancement has made people restless and destroyed the environment as never before in human history. It is the inner spirit of the human being that Vivekananda wanted to awake. It is in this context that his ideas become relevant. 

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Eternal Words

Swami Adbhutananda

Compiled by Swami Siddhananda; translated by Swami Sarvadevananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

IN THIS KALI YUGA there is no greater virtue than to give food to others. Even giving a fistful of rice to a beggar will surely bring good to the giver.

Honest Spending and Charitable Actions

To some God gives wealth but no desire to perform charitable acts. Again, to others who wish to do charitable acts he gives no wealth. Know that God has great compassion for the one who is endowed with both money and the desire to act charitably.

With as much power as God has given you, you should perform noble acts. Let no one be harmed.

God says: 'Protect creation as much as you can. Don't destroy any creature. As you go on protecting living beings, you will be able to understand who I am.'

The teaching of Sri Chaitanya is to not forget the poor. If one looks after the poor, God becomes pleased with him. Surely, the one who protects others will achieve every good.

Why do you verbally abuse people who come to beg? Happily give them one handful of rice if you wish. If you can't do that, tell them in sweet words that you are unable to give them anything. Does it cost you anything to say a few sweet words? At best you will give one handful of rice, or a paisa, this much will be your gift. What need is there for you to engage in some long rambling talk? You don't live on begging; how can you understand their suffering? If you

ever fell into such circumstances and someone abused you with harsh words while you were begging, how much pain you would feel! At least once, think about this.

At the time of extreme famine God tests those who help others. Is it a matter of ordinary fortune that the Marwari gentlemen protected the honour of so many by supplying them with clothing? When famine occurs, whoever has two handfuls of food should help others by giving them at least one. The person who gives nothing is a culprit to God and the country.

There is no suffering like starvation. People can't even fill their stomachs; how can they practise religion? No religious activities are possible if one can't fill one's stomach.

God is getting everything done. All the arrangements needed have been done beforehand. As soon as one engages oneself in the field of activity, all of the provisions will automatically appear around. Showing compassion to the poor will assure one's own welfare. God undoubtedly protects the one who protects the poor.

People can spend all they have to fulfil their own selfish ends, yet out of stinginess they won't even spend five paisa in the service of God. It is written in the scriptures that one should give at least something to the gods, to the sadhus, and to the priests of holy places of pilgrimage. The Master used to say that one should carry some gift while visiting deities, kings, and sadhus. One shouldn't go to them empty-handed. That gesture is similar to showing honour to the sadhu's garb.

The Master used to say that it is very good to feed a sadhu—especially at Kashi. If the sadhu is pleased, it brings the giver enormous welfare. In this Kali Yuga it brings immense glory to the one who serves food.

[Ishvarchandra] Vidyasagar was a truly honest scholarly man. He earned money by hard work and charitably gave money to others. As was his work so was his reputation. He was a great renunciate. The money he earned by his labour was put to effective use.

Who is more fortunate than a person who has sacrificed his life in the service of others, feels no difference between friends and strangers, and feels the suffering of others deeply? We've become so selfish that we don't look after others in their times of dangers and difficulties. We're wholly occupied in discussing the calumny of others and seeing others' happiness; we get jealous, as if we can't even stand the sight of their success. Surely this selfishness has caused our own misfortunes. God is pleased if one can serve others with total selflessness. If God is pleased, discrimination, renunciation, faith, and devotion will manifest.

Can your husband give you peace? God alone confers peace. The *vidya-stri*, wise wife, acts charitably and does japa for the welfare of her husband. See, the women of the babus' houses secretly perform charity, which brings happiness and auspiciousness to their husbands. Are there any such wise homes where, for the welfare of their family, women secretly serve the poor and afflicted, the monks, holy people, and the deities? This is how it used to be in the past.

Doubt and Distrust

Until you have developed the right type of devotion and faith for your guru, you should not go to take advice from anyone and everyone. Should you do so, there is a chance that doubts

about your guru may arise. If you but once develop doubt about your guru, it becomes extremely difficult to remove it.

Why do I obey others? It is because my suffering persists. I lack faith in myself. Does one who has faith in oneself sit idly waiting and hoping to get some help from others?

Without the guru's grace doubts do not depart. One must have unmoving, unwavering devotion if one wants to receive his grace.

Doubts must go. Nothing will happen until doubt is dispelled. Doubt is dispelled by ceaselessly repeating the name of God. He himself creates doubt; again, he himself removes it.

During sickness a person repeatedly prays, 'O Lord Taraknath! O Lord Taraknath!' At other times, the person doesn't even once take Taraknath's name. What good can such behaviour bring?

Some people have been forever doing evil deeds. That is why they sometimes develop faith in God but at other times do not.

Everyone cries out, 'Bless me! bless me!' Who really longs for the grace of God? If a person is healthy and has enough money, he himself stands like a God. Will he honour God anymore?

What shall I tell you? Fifty years of your life have simply been lost in only trying to conclude whether God exists or whether he is formless or with form. Now that you have reached the end of your life, when will you perform japa and meditation?

No one can live in this world without performing action. Some do good deeds while others act badly. God is pleased with those whose actions are good. People also love and respect them and criticize those who behave badly. Whoever hears God's message and follows his command will surely perform beneficial actions; but those who consider all of God's words to be untrue will only engage in bad deeds.

It annoys and irritates you to offer God his own items with love and respect. Is this not a matter of extreme disgrace? Oh my dear! As you lack genuine trust, faith, and devotion, you suffer so much pain!

In this world everyone wants to cheat each other. What to speak of others; husbands cheat their wives; wives cheat their husbands. Cheating and duplicity are running rampant. No one has trust in another. Oh my dear! A person cheats himself when he tries to cheat others. Even before he cheats another, he has already cheated himself!

Character is undoubtedly of utmost importance. What is the use of meditation and japa if one's character doesn't improve? One has done bad actions; that is why one's mind is impure and doubts about God arise.

Doubt is ever-present in humans. Is it an easy thing to escape from doubt? God takes a human form to remove our doubts.

In earlier days people used to live harmoniously among themselves. They didn't distrust one another. On account of that people lived happily. Nowadays, due to secular education all types of doubts have crept in. People can't live together amicably any longer. For this reason they suffer.

Prayer

If one prays earnestly God himself draws one closer to him. The Master told Rakhal Maharaj and me to pray. By praying one can realize that God alone is true and the world illusory. God wants us to live a pure life. He understands the value of a life of purity.

An intelligent person will call upon God, offer his devotion to him, and constantly take refuge in him. From the depths of your heart reveal your condition to him. He will surely make everything right. If you long to know God, by his grace, he will surely reveal himself to you.

One should pray sincerely to the guru and to God to control one's lust and anger. As soon as one can think of the guru as God, one's purpose is fulfilled.

You should surely reveal your sufferings to God. He has himself placed you in this world. You should think that you are working for the world, which belongs to him. What harm is there in letting him know about your sufferings?

God has put you into action; again, he alone can destroy your karma. Pray to God who dwells in the core of your heart. He will surely answer you.

People should call upon God in the evening. Instead, they approach a sadhu and prattle meaninglessly. Will that bring them any benefit? A sadhu won't maintain any association with such people. In the evening one should first sit peacefully, then repeat the name of God. One should call upon him to remove all worldly sufferings.

Truthfulness

As no one needs to pay any fees or taxes to speak the truth, what harm is there in trying to be truthful? How can people practise dharma if they don't even know how to speak a word of truth?

How will people who don't know how to speak a word of truth do japa and meditation? Let those who can't meditate give financial help and personal service to the poor and afflicted to the best of their ability. God will be very pleased by that.

A person who is fearful and doubtful can't prosper in any area, neither in worldly life nor in religious life. These two attitudes cause the mind to contract. He is a true hero who, without any concern for whether the world exists or not, proceeds forward to attain the Truth. That person alone achieves the highest goal.

Oh my dear! Try to love Truth. Try to realize it. God's nature is Truth. In Truth, jealousy and falsehood cannot last. In Truth there is no duality.

Yearning for God

One is indeed fortunate who yearns for God even when one has children, wealth, and prosperity. Only those who feel an inner emptiness call on God. People in this world keep themselves terribly occupied with mundane sensual pleasures. To the extent one calls on God, that much at least is good.

I heard that Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was unburdening his sorrows to God. He had no lack of wealth, retinue, or the rest, yet what an intense feeling of emptiness he had within! What can we understand of that?

Don't be a good-for-nothing monk or householder. Each of you must try to be ideal in your own stage of life. For what purpose have you become a monk or a brahmachari? Giving up hearth and home, making your parents cry, you have come here for God realization alone, is it not? Be aware! Let not one moment of your life be spent in vain. So long as you have a body, don't for a single second indulge in laziness. Remain

ever engaged in austerities. You must think: 'I shall either engage myself in repeating the mantra or let my body fall!' God realization is not possible for one who goes around spending his time in gossip and useless talk. If one wants to realize God, one must practise spiritual disciplines and devotion. With full dependence on God and no dependence on any friend or other support, come out. Finding a solitary place engage yourself in austerity. A monk must be fearless; he must renounce all maya. He must give up attachment even to his own body. For one who does not fully renounce, there can't be perfect union with God.

There is a vast difference between doing noble work with love and doing it by compulsion. One who works out of love will surely prosper. God becomes bound by love and devotion. Love increases by the practice of love.

What good will it do to be restless? If you must be restless, be restless for God. What is the benefit of staying busy with worthless work?



God's Will and Grace

Human planning is of a varied and different nature from God's [acts]. God will not act according to human planning. He is self-willed.

God makes some great, and again makes others small. What is the meaning of this? In this world one sees that at the time of death a rich man gives his wealth and possessions to his most capable and honest son because he knows that this son will feed himself well and also share his wealth with his brothers. The man won't give his wealth to his ill-fated sons; they will neither enjoy the wealth themselves nor share it with their brothers. In the same manner, God makes certain people great by giving them his special power, by which others will also be benefited.

If one calls upon God with all earnestness, he removes all obstructions and obstacles. He wipes out the results of karma. He is the master of creation. If he wills it, is there anything he cannot do?

Is God like the fruit of a tree that you can grasp him by mere wishing? If you want to attain him, his grace is required; his compassion is required. To receive God's grace you must secure the love and blessings of the sadhus. Have faith that God exists. You will attain him in that very place where you call upon him with faith.

It is very difficult to understand God's maya. A petty soul may think, 'Let me climb this tree with one leap! Let me jump across the sun and moon!' The person doesn't understand that nothing can happen without his grace. That is why people have so many troubles. Can anything be accomplished without his grace?

If I am not the servant of God, whose servant shall I be? If one becomes God's servant, his ego goes away, harmony with others comes, and one attains liberation.

You should understand that the desire to perform japa and meditation is also due to his grace.

It requires the grace of God to have money and goodwill at the same time.

By thinking he will be great, does a person become great? Only the person whom God makes great will become great.

God can be attained only through his grace. Only those who have done spiritual practices and devotion have understood at last that God cannot be attained merely by such practices. He can only be attained through his grace.

If one does not practise austerities, God cannot be realized. To the extent that you attain purity, you will understand him. Can he be realized without performing spiritual disciplines?

Who has the power to inflict any pain on the one to whom God has given comfort?

No one can properly value the ochre cloth. Without the special power and grace of God, no one can wear the ochre cloth. But the ochre cloth carries not the least value for the person for whom God is unreal. Is it enough to merely wear ochre cloth purchased with half a paisa's worth of ochre dye? The only reason to wear the ochre cloth is to ensure that traits like jealousy, honour, dishonour, and anger do not arise in one's mind. Is it not? Not just anybody and everybody can do that.

He is verily saved whose celibacy is protected by the Master. Who, by self-effort, has the power to protect one's brahmacharya? I feel extreme joy when I see that a young man, having a wife of eighteen years of age, lives together with her like brother and sister. The Master himself is protecting them.

The word 'faith' is very difficult to understand. Real faith does not arise so long as one has not attained God realization. When one attains that, his faith will remain unshaken even if the entire world stands in opposition. God

realization is not possible for one who is not celibate.

A father gives his wealth and possessions to one son and makes him work hard. He gives the same to his other son without making him work at all. Likewise, God blesses one without making him do any spiritual practices, but blesses another by making him work. This is God's will.

When his grace dawns, you may receive many spiritual instructions, but no good will come by merely hearing them if they don't get reflected in your life.

Without God's grace suffering doesn't go away. There are so many great people in this world; yet their love can bring no peace. To illustrate this, the example has been given of the Chataka bird, which will never be satisfied with river water. If God loves a person, that person will have peace, no matter whether one is born in a poor or a wealthy family. This is called the grace and blessing of the guru, the Chosen Ideal, and God.

Mahaprabhu (Sri Chaitanya) redeemed Jagai and Madhai. Such great souls have the power to remove evil and restore goodness. Unless one is a renunciate one cannot fathom their significance.

If God becomes pleased, one will receive alms even from the house of a poor person (who has little to offer). If not, no alms will be obtained even from a rich person's house. The Master used to say that food received from begging is pure. That is why sadhus go for begging.

One surely needs to do austerities to earn money and wealth. In this world some cannot get a morsel of food, while others are able to feed ten people. It is truly a great fortune for those who can offer food. That person is fortunate who, by his hard labour, can distribute food even to a few people. Know for certain that God has great mercy for him.

The Master used to say that when a person is less than thirty, his blood courses quickly through his body making all his senses acutely alert. That person whom God protects at such times will be saved. The strength of his blood begins to reduce after he crosses thirty. Within that period one surely needs to do spiritual and devotional practices. Nothing can be accomplished when one advances in age. Is it possible, my dear, to do spiritual practices in one's old age?

To the person whom God gives money, he may give no children. Again, to the person who is very poor, God may give many children. Understand that God has shown his mercy to that person to whom he has given both (wealth and progeny).

When one takes a human birth, happiness and misery are sure to follow. Even in such a predicament it is auspicious to take the name of God as much as possible. Will suffering simply go away by sitting and crying out lamentably: 'What misery! What suffering!' One must undertake good actions and earnestly call on God. All suffering goes away if his grace dawns.

Spirituality is not accomplished in a single birth. Something is attained in this body, and in the next birth something more. People think that perhaps everything has happened in a single life. Even so, it is surely possible if his grace descends. Is that impossible?

Can God be realized by performing austerities? One cannot attain God without his grace.

If God is gracious, he can liberate a sinner without making him perform any penance. Even a fruit pecked by a crow is sometimes offered during ritual worship. But God makes the sinful person piteously call on him. That is surely his penance. God gradually turns all the tendencies of his mind, intellect, and the rest towards him, as he did with Jagai and Madhai.

(To be continued)

Svarajya Siddhih: Attaining Self-dominion

Gangadharendra Saraswati

Translated from Sanskrit and annotated by Swami Narasimhananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THUS THE OBJECTION of the opposition against the Advaita Vedanta interpretation of the first aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* has been shown to be flawed, and the stance of Advaita Vedanta has been established by defeating all the arguments of the opponents. In this process, while explaining the meaning of the word ‘That’, the non-dual Existence-Consciousness-Knowledge Absolute, Brahman, mentioned in the scriptures has been described as both the material and efficient cause of the universe. To show harmony in Vedanta and also to put in brief the import of the scriptures, the second, third, and fourth aphorisms of the *Brahma Sutra* are being discussed here.

यस्मादुत्पत्तिगुप्ती क्षतिरपि जगतां यच्च शास्त्रैकयोनिः
सर्वज्ञं मायया यत् सहजसुखसदद्वैतसंविस्वरूपम् ।
तत् ब्रह्म स्वप्रकाशं श्रुतिशिखरगिरां सैव तात्पर्यभूमिः
स्वात्माऽसौ यं विदित्वा जनिमृतिजलधिं निस्तरन्तीह सन्तः

॥ १५ ॥

Out of the maya of which this universe is produced, maintained, and destroyed; that which can be known only through the scriptures; that which is omniscient, naturally blissful, eternal, free from dualities, of the nature of knowledge and self-revealing; that is Brahman. This Brahman alone is known as the individual Atman by each person. Having known one’s Atman to be Brahman, the saints cross the ocean of birth and death.

The universe is created from Brahman, which

is both the material and efficient cause and consists of Hiranyagarbha and of four elements—earth, water, fire, and air. Brahman causes the origin of this universe and living beings and also the actions that take place here. Brahman causes the manifestation or evolution, continuance, and destruction or involution of this universe. On involution, only the cause remains. The second aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* says: ‘That from which (are derived) the birth and so on, of this (universe).’ Here the aphorism is both an indication and assertion of the birth, continuance, and dissolution of the universe. The words ‘birth and so on’ have to be construed to have the same meaning as mentioned in the Upanishads: ‘That from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born, that towards which they move and into which they merge. That is Brahman.’⁷⁷ Here the words ‘birth and so on’ do not refer to the six modifications of a body as mentioned in Yaska’s *Nirukta*: ‘Origination, existence, growth, change, decay, and destruction.’ These modifications are possible only during the continuance of the universe, and hence the other phases of birth and dissolution of the universe would not have been covered had the definition of Yaska been applied in the present context. Further, these modifications are based on an intermediate cause, the universe, and not on the primal cause, Brahman. The second aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* is: ‘*Janmādyasya*

yatah.' Here the word *yatah* signifies the material causality of the birth, continuance, and destruction of the universe on the basis of the aphorism of Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*: '*Janikartuh prakṛtiḥ*; the meaning of the word *prakṛti* is progenitor.'⁷⁸

The second aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* is: '(Brahman is omniscient) because of (its) being the source of the scriptures.' Now it has been established that since Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the universe, it has to be omniscient and capable of manifesting or revealing all knowledge. Such knowledge includes the Vedas, like the Rig Veda. Brahman is the source of all scriptures. Also it is only through the scriptures that Brahman can be known. Why so? Since the scriptures originate from Brahman, they talk of their origin by giving various indications to the indescribable Brahman. They are the only texts that talk of the means of knowing Brahman. There are no proofs of Brahman other than the scriptures. It is said in the Vedas: '*Na vedavinmanute tam brhantaṁ*; one who is ignorant of Vedas cannot understand the Supreme.'⁷⁹ '*Tam tvaupanīśadam puruṣaṁ prcchāmi*; I ask you of that Being who is to be known only from the Upanishads.'⁸⁰

Objection: How can Brahman, which is spoken of in the scriptures, be the cause of this universe? The scriptures describe Brahman as independent of any principle: 'It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long' (3.8.8). 'He has neither a body nor any organ.'⁸¹ 'That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior.'⁸² Even if we were to hold that it is from Brahman that the universe originates as a modification, just as milk is modified into curd, then because of such modification Brahman will change completely and become the universe, which is altogether different, and so Brahman will cease to exist. There is contradiction in the scriptures in that they talk of Brahman being both the immediate and efficient cause of the universe in one

place and of it being without any attributes in another place—in any of these instances the impermanence of Brahman is hinted at.

Reply: No, this is not so. The Upanishads declare: 'One should know that Prakṛiti is surely maya, and the Supreme Lord is the ruler of maya to be sure. This whole universe is verily pervaded by what are his limbs.'⁸³ The scriptures portray maya as that which can make the impossible possible. If the universe were produced truly because Brahman was the cause, just like a pot is produced by clay as the cause, then there would have been a contradiction. But in this case that is not so. The rope appears as a snake due to ignorance. The rope does not change into a snake like the clay changes into a pot. However, if the rope were not there, there would have been no mistaking it as a snake. Without the rope there would be no snake. Though the knowledge of the universe is a false knowledge, it is based on Brahman.

This is a case of superimposition, and the superimposed does not affect the substratum. A snake has been superimposed on the rope, but it does not affect the rope. Still, Brahman is the cause of the universe, because Brahman is non-dual. There cannot be any entity other than Brahman; otherwise Brahman would become limited by that other entity. The snake is there because the rope is there. The perception of the snake is false, but the perception of the rope is real. There is only one Reality.

'Swami Turiyananda [a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna] passed away at 6.45 p.m. on 21 July 1922. The night before his death, he said to his attendants, "Tomorrow is the last day." Then he asked an attendant to help him sit up. With folded hands he saluted the Master, and then drank a little holy water. He then summed up his life's experience: "Everything is real. Brahman is real. The world is real. The world is Brahman. The life force is established in Truth. Hail

Ramakrishna! Hail Ramakrishna! Say that he is the embodiment of Truth, and embodiment of Knowledge.”⁸⁴ Brahman *perceived as the world* is unreal, but the world is essentially Brahman, which is the only Reality.

The superimposition of the universe on Brahman is due to maya, and just as maya is false, the universe is also false, and there is no question of any modification taking place in Brahman. In the wonderful introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*, Acharya Shankara says: ‘Whenever there is a superimposition of one thing on another, the locus is not affected in any way either by the merits or demerits of the thing superimposed.’ Then, what is the nature of Brahman, knowing which one can conclude that it is the cause of the universe? The nature of Brahman is told in the Vedas: ‘(He) knew Bliss as Brahman.’⁸⁵ ‘Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity’ (2.1.1). Brahman is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. It is natural, real, and permanent. It exists as the supreme bliss when the universe, which is false, is removed by the knowledge of Brahman. Therefore, there is no duality, as its nature is non-dual. Since it is not covered and is self-revealing, Brahman is of the nature of Consciousness and Knowledge.

Swami Vivekananda gives a lucid explanation of the phenomenon of maya, which is by its nature inexplicable:

Maya is not a theory for the explanation of the world; it is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction, that wherever there is good, there must also be evil, and wherever there is evil, there must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow, and everyone who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa. Nor can this state of things be remedied. We may verily imagine that there will be a place where there will

be only good and no evil, where we shall only smile and never weep. This is impossible in the very nature of things; for the conditions will remain the same. Wherever there is the power of producing a smile in us, there lurks the power of producing tears. Wherever there is the power of producing happiness, there lurks somewhere the power of making us miserable.

Thus the Vedanta philosophy is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It voices both these views and takes things as they are. It admits that this world is a mixture of good and evil, happiness and misery, and that to increase the one, one must of necessity increase the other. There will never be a perfectly good or bad world, because the very idea is a contradiction in terms. The great secret revealed by this analysis is that good and bad are not two cut-and-dried, separate existences. ...

The Vedanta says, there must come a time when we shall look back and laugh at the ideals which make us afraid of giving up our individuality. Each one of us wants to keep this body for an indefinite time, thinking we shall be very happy, but there will come a time when we shall laugh at this idea. Now, if such be the truth, we are in a state of hopeless contradiction—neither existence nor non-existence, neither misery nor happiness, but a mixture of them.⁸⁶

The objectification of the universe leads to the conclusion that it is false:

The world is false (*mithyā*) because it is presented as an object to our consciousness, just as the snake perceived in the place of a rope is presented as an object and is false. The argument seems to emphasize that the illusory snake is presented as an object and it is taken to be false. The world does not differ from the illusory snake in so far as it is an object of consciousness—we cannot distinguish between one object of consciousness and another object of consciousness in so far as they are objects. Therefore the world also is false like the discredited appearance of the snake in the place of the rope.⁸⁷

In the language of the *Drig-Drishya-Viveka*: 'The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. It (eye) is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modifications is perceived and the Witness (the Self) is verily the perceiver. But It (the Witness) is not perceived (by any other).'⁸⁸

Acharya Shankara also explains maya in his *Vivekachudamani*:

Avidya or maya, called also the Undifferentiated, is the power of God. She is without beginning, is made up of the three *gunas*, and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects she produces. It is she who brings forth this whole universe. She is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different not both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both. She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words. Maya can be destroyed by the realization of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discernment of the rope. She has her *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—named after their respective functions.⁸⁹

Now the objection regarding the contradiction of Brahman being dependent on something is being countered. Brahman is self-illuminating. A lamp gives light but there is a space that it illuminates and thus is very much in the realm of duality. The knowledge of Brahman is not so, it does not illuminate anything, it is self-revealing. Such knowledge is the culmination of all the Vedas. The fourth aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* says: 'But that Brahman (is known from the Upanishads), (it) being the object of their fullest import.' The Vedas have been compared to high mountains because they provide us with sublime thought for our emancipation.

Objection: Let it be that Brahman is such, but what does it matter to us?

Reply: The nature of Brahman does matter to us. The indication given by the scriptures is direct and not indirect. Here Brahman does not refer to something or someone other than us. Brahman is our true nature and the scriptures indicate its nature. There are three types of indications or attributes, also called *lakṣaṇas*: *vyāvartaka lakṣaṇa*, distinguishing attribute; *svārūpa lakṣaṇa*, essential attribute; and *taṭastha lakṣaṇa*, apparent attribute. That Brahman is not matter is a distinguishing attribute, and that it is the cause of this universe is an apparent attribute. However, the nature of Brahman being self-illuminating and blissful is its essential attribute. This attribute tries to explain our true nature and has been given in the scriptures to encourage the enquiry of Brahman.

Having known Brahman through the study of the scriptures and contemplating on them one crosses the beginningless and seemingly endless ocean of grief caused by repeated births and deaths. This is achieved in this very birth, just at the instant of attaining the knowledge of Brahman. The *jivanmukta* does not need to come to this world again.

(To be continued)

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REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
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Indian Monastic Buddhism

Gregory Schopen

Motilal Banarsidass, 41, U A Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007. Website: www.mlb.com. 2010. Part I, xxii + 298 pp; Part II, xvi + 416 pp. ₹ 995.

Buddhism is one of the major world religions and has a large following in Asia. Its universality and appeal, in modern times, is helping it spread in the West as well. Buddhism significantly reshaped Indian thinking and philosophy. India's ancient institution of sannyasa, monasticism, also owes much to Buddha's reformation. Buddha's extraordinary life has inspired millions down the ages towards nirvana. Swami Vivekananda in his teachings paid rich tributes to his greatness and also had the highest regard for his personality. During and after the reign of the great Emperor Ashoka (304–232 BCE), Buddhism spread all over Asia.

However, after a long sway, Buddhism could not hold its ground in India against the Hindu revival led by Acharya Shankara, and that has been one of the puzzling facts of history. What remains today is the grand philosophy, ethics, yoga, and psychology, besides dilapidated structures like those of Nalanda, Ajanta, and so on. Swami Vivekananda, with his phenomenal insight, sums up the reason for the decadence of Buddhism: 'Then these monasteries became rich. The real cause of the downfall is here.' Another reason put forward by Swami Bhajanananda is this: 'In Buddhism, religious authority and the power of social cohesion were vested in the monastic institution. Therefore, when Buddhist monasteries and universities in India were destroyed by foreign invaders, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it led to the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its origin.' Buddhist monasteries and stupas became storehouses of wealth, either donated to

the monks or collected by them from the laity, attracting foreign invaders to loot the monasteries. Swami Vivekananda also points out that monasticism was prescribed for one and all. The best blood of society took to the monastic life and thus weakened the social fabric to such an extent that invaders encountered little resistance.

It was difficult to review this book because I accessed it as a monk, studying the lives of monks who lived in harsher times than today. I also saw, as one deeply interested in Buddhism and its influence, its monasteries and life in general. It was an engaging study. I found evidence of struggles and secrets, which took place behind the walls of so many unknown stupas. The first followers of Buddha, trying to adapt themselves to his new path, still clung to their previous habits and rituals of praying, building stupas for departed relatives, and so on. There is evidence of clashes of interests between monks and lay disciples when it came to property and money issues. Belief in supernatural powers, ghosts, and demigods were discussed and cultivated, which diluted Buddha's main teachings.

Indians are known to be very poor in maintaining records of events, names, and other particulars, but the stupas and the ancient texts in Pali have hidden nuggets of information waiting to be discovered, and this is what Gregory Schopen successfully did.

The life of a monk is curiously interesting because it is shrouded in secrecy and also because it is completely opposite to that of the householders, who constitute the majority. Such a study becomes difficult as it has to be often reconstructed from little data. The author has made a painstaking research into the various texts and inscriptions found in the caves and dwellings used by Buddhist monks. He corroborates his findings with texts that recorded the times of Buddha to give an account of the monastic practices. Moreover,

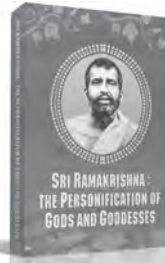
this study assumes great importance because it highlights the internal factors that were at work within the monastic community. Why and how did the monastic community differ from the ideals that were professed and preached by Buddha is eye-opening. Buddha, when faced with various problems brought to him by his followers, showed sharp acumen as well as concern for his disciples. This great support was absent after Buddha's *parinirvana*.

In Buddhist monastic literature called *Vinaya* a distinction was made between the wealth that was owned by the monastery and the private wealth of monks. The *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya* explicitly recognizes a monk's continuing right to inherit family property upon the death of his father! Things borrowed from lay disciples or the king were to be returned properly and therefore the Buddha had to intervene and prescribe: 'On the bedding is to be written: "This is the religious gift of King Bimbisara."' This was probably the seed of all future accounting practices. One finds references to coining of counterfeit currency by the monks! What could have driven them to do this? We can only presume that it was avarice and the desire to have bigger stupas built in their names or in the names of their deceased relatives.

Gregory Schopen does not hesitate in placing harsh facts before us, but has a humorous way of doing it. Although the book is comprised of research papers, it reads like a novel and the narrative is interesting and absorbing. One does find repetitions, but that is quite understandable in a volume of this kind. The book is a compilation of seminal essays that have appeared since the 1980s, which point out that monasteries in Buddhist India were not cut off from mainstream society.

This work is an important addition to the 'Buddhist Tradition Series' of the publisher. It is highly recommended to those who want to study monastic traditions and practices of ancient cultures. Students of archaeology and linguistics will also find this to be a treasure house of knowledge that can enable them to arrive at the meaning of obscure texts and inscriptions scientifically.

Swami Atmajnananda
Sri Ramakrishna Math,
Chennai



**Sri Ramakrishna:
The Personification of
Gods and Goddesses**
Rasipuram Ramabadrana

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore,
Chennai, 600 004. Website: www.chennaiamath.org. 2011. xii + 521 pp.
₹ 90.

All incarnations of God are saints, but not all saints are incarnations. While a saint can ferry a few souls across the ocean of samsara, an incarnation is like a huge liner that carries lakhs. According to his own emphatic declaration, Sri Ramakrishna is an incarnation and the synergy of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. To certain spiritually sensitive minds the Master reveals his multi-dimensional Divinity, which ordinarily remains hidden. One can conclude that Rasipuram Ramabadrana is a rare devotee and a recipient of Sri Ramakrishna's grace to be able to write this delightful book. He records that Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi are the personifications of not only Sri Rama and Sri Krishna but of almost all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon.

The book consists of sixty chapters in which the author shows that Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi are the personifications of sixty different divinities, prophets, preceptors, mystics, and super-devotees. The author's enunciations are not casual remarks born of sentimentalism but conclusive evidence drawn from scriptural legends and incidents in the lives of the holy duo. The book bears the stamp of the author's grounding in mythological lore and familiarity with the duo's sacred lila.

In the chapter 'Sri Ramakrishna as Narasimha' the author discerns similarities between the man-lion and the Master in their destruction of demons—the demon Hiranyakashipu by the former, and the demon of worldliness and irreligion by the latter. Narasimha avatara is powerful and awe-inspiring, and Sri Ramakrishna is a colossus among the galaxy of avatars. Their respective leonine facets are also discussed.

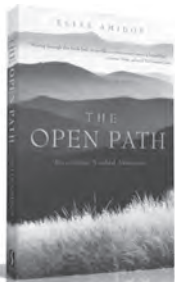
The parallel between Sri Sarada Devi and Andal is emphasized by the author in an article. Their pronounced religious bent from childhood; their keenness in rendering *pushpa kainkarya*, flower

service, to their respective chosen deities—Kali by Sri Sarada Devi and Lakshmi and Vishnu by Andal—their spiritual maturity from their very birth; their proficiency in offering hymnal worship; common fondness for parrots; dedication in performing austerities; and experience of *viraha tapa*, pangs of separation, while separated from their consorts.

Of the sixty essays, twenty-seven deal with Sri Sarada Devi and the remaining thirty-three with Sri Ramakrishna. The title of the book should, in all fairness, be ‘Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi: Personifications of Gods and Goddesses’. Perhaps the author could not brook the idea of Sri Sarada Devi being separate from Sri Ramakrishna and ought to be mentioned separately. They are, to borrow Kalidasa’s immortal phrase, *vagarthamiva sampriktau*, inseparable as a word and its meaning.

The book, a model of simple and lucid presentation, has an universal appeal and is bound to be a powerful force in popularizing Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi.

N Hariharan
Madurai



**The Open Path: Recognizing
Nondual Awareness**

Elias Amidon

Sentient Publications, 1113 Spruce Street, Boulder, CO 80303. Website: www.sentientpublications.com. 2012. xiii + 226 pp. \$16.95.

A study of religious adherence by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project found that 16 per cent of people worldwide have no religious affiliation. ‘Spiritual but not Religious’ (SBNR) is a phenomenon now widespread over the world. Disenchantment with orthodox organized religions, issues concerning rights for women and gays, and intolerance towards other religions seem to be driving people to become SBNR. Despite criticism from representatives of organized religions, SBNR is here to stay.

One way of reconciling the obvious differences in religions is through Sri Ramakrishna. His statement ‘*jato mat, tato path*; as many faiths, so many paths’ would be a solution to the multifaceted

problems of religious diversity. However, many would not accept Sri Ramakrishna’s teachings because of cultural bias. Another solution would be to identify and associate with the impersonal Reality, hidden almost in all religions and forms of worship. It is this aspect of spirituality, shorn of externals, that most SBNR people are moving towards.

Elias Amidon, affectionately known as Pir Elias, is the spiritual director of the Sufi Way International, a non-sectarian mystical order in the lineage of Sufi Inayat Khan. His personal study of Sufism, Theravada Buddhism, Native American teachings, Zen, and Christianity is reflected in *The Open Path*.

Understanding the concept of an impersonal God and progressing towards it is the ultimate Goal. However, terms such as non-dual awareness, Buddha nature, unconditioned mind, ground of one’s being, and so on confuse aspirants on the path. Hence, Elias draws upon his considerable experiences and forms a series of exercises to show the way. His introductory remarks—on the distinction between the Unconditioned and Conditioned, and the paradox between the dualistic subject-object arrangements of thought and language—are great aids in correctly accessing the book. The spiritual exercises that Elias prescribes after each chapter are a further help in understanding the path.

The initial chapters on awareness and Self-enquiry are well written and seem to come from personal experience. The chapter on ‘Nonduality and Prayer’ is more rooted in Sufi mystic poetry—this chapter could have included a wider selection culled from the Upanishads, Psalms, and the Buddhist Gathas. The chapter on the ‘Art of Awakening’ is a treatise on perception, which the author rightly describes as a living art. The chapter ‘The Ocean of Kindness’ is a real treasure the author keeps for the end. Diving into Tao, Zen, and Tibetan Buddhism Elias succinctly brings out the ideas of non-dual action, equanimity, and unconditional kindness.

The Open Path will definitely supplement a seeker’s collection of books on non-duality and may also be a guide towards the mysticism hidden in orthodox organized religions.

Swami Shrutisiddhananda
Ramakrishna Mission,
Delhi

REPORTS



Inner and outer views of one of the trams launched by Calcutta Tram Corporation

Commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

The Government of Karnataka, in collaboration with the Ramakrishna Mission centres in the state, held youth congregations in all the 30 districts of Karnataka on 11 January 2013. In each district about 600 to 800 youths participated in the programmes, which included screening of a documentary on Swamiji.

On 13 February Calcutta Tram Corporation (CTC) launched two trams, *Vivek Tirtha* and *Parivrajak*, to spread awareness about Swamiji's life and message. *Vivek Tirtha* is an exhibition tram displaying letters, pictures, speeches, and biography of Swamiji. It will be stationed at different CTC depots in Kolkata till 15 April 2013. *Parivrajak* is a passenger tram decorated with pictures and quotations of Swamiji. Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, flagged off the trams and addressed the meeting organized on this occasion.

The following centres organized various programmes to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. **Allahabad:** An intra-faith conference from 7 to 9 February at the Kumbha Mela camp, in which several scholarly monks of various Hindu denominations and groups delivered talks. **Bagerhat** (Bangladesh): A procession, a devotees' convention, public meetings, and cultural programmes from 19 to 22 February. A large number of people attended the four-day celebration, which was inaugurated by Swami Suhitananda on 19 February.



Baranagar Math: A youth convention on 2 February, attended by 500 delegates. Swami Suhitananda delivered the inaugural address, released a book and a DVD, and inaugurated the exhibition set up on the occasion. A spiritual retreat on 4 February, in which 400 devotees participated. Cultural programmes at Girish Mancha, Baghbazar, on 8 February, attended by about 900 people. **Barisal** (Bangladesh): A two-day programme comprising a procession, a public meeting, and classical music renderings on 15 and 16 February, attended by about 2,000 people. **Belgaum:** Quiz contests in January, in which 271 students from 3 schools participated. **Chandigarh:** A students' convention on 28 January, in which 150 students took part. A teachers' convention on 29 January, in which 130 teachers participated. The centre also launched a yearlong Vivekananda Ratha Yatra (procession with Vivekananda carriage) on 3 February to spread the message of Swamiji in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Chandigarh. **Chengalpattu:** Processions, devotional music, and film shows on Swamiji at Melakandai, Aurimedu, Mazhuvankaranai, Kollampakkam, Orakattupettai, Pandur, Kotapunjai, Sirunallur, Melavasalai on 19, 20, 25, 26

and 27 January and 2, 9, 16 and 17 February respectively. **Coimbatore Mission:** An inter-school kabaddi tournament on 1 February, in which about 420 students from 32 schools took part. A youth rally on 2 February, in which nearly 1,000 students participated. **Cooch Behar:** A district-level youth convention on 6 February, in which about 1,500 students participated. **Dehradun** (Kishanpur): At the initiative of the centre a seven-foot bronze statue of Swamiji was installed at the Mussorie Diversion Circle by the chief minister of Uttarakhand on 12 January. **Delhi:** A programme of classical devotional songs on 17 February, attended by nearly 400 people. **Dinajpur** (Bangladesh): A procession, discourses, an educational conference, and cultural programmes on 22 and 23 February. About 3,500 persons participated in the procession and 400 delegate-teachers took part in the educational conference. **Guwahati:** A procession, a youth convention, public meetings, a quiz competition, and cultural programmes from 8 to 10 February; about 2,000 persons participated in the procession and nearly 400 people attended the other programmes. **Hyderabad:** Workshop on the theme 'Leadership Lessons from Swami Vivekananda for the Youth' on 23 February, attended by nearly 700 youths. **Institute of Culture, Kolkata:** A national seminar on 'Indian Traditions in Search of Unity through Music' on 9 and 10 February, in which 12 papers were read out. Musical presentations formed part of the seminar to appreciate the extent of unity in Indian music. About 100 persons attended the programme. An art exhibition on the theme 'Renaissance of India and the World: Life and Mission of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda' was inaugurated on 17 February. The exhibition will be on display till 14 March 2013. **Kanchipuram:** Speeches and cultural competitions in one school and one college on 15

February, attended altogether by 550 students. **Kankurgachhi:** The centre has started a Vivekananda Endowment Lecture. The first lecture, delivered by Swami Chetanananda on 9 February, was attended by about 1,000 people. **Kanpur:** Speeches, devotional music, and a youth convention from 16 to 18 February. In all, 750 persons attended the programmes. **Kathmandu** (Nepal): Satsangs (religious gatherings) at Pathamari on 6 and 7 January, attended by nearly 1,200 people. A programme on 12 January, in which Sri Ram Baran Yadav, President, Nepal, and Sri Jayant Prasad, Indian Ambassador to Nepal, delivered speeches. Around 450 people, including several dignitaries, attended the programme. **Khetri:** A state-level youth convention on 9 February, in which about 4,000 youths participated. **Limbdi:** Talks on Swamiji's life and message in five educational institutions between 6 and 18 February, attended by nearly 3,800 students. **Madurai:** Swami Vivekananda reached Madurai on 2 February 1897 on his triumphant return from the West. He was given a reception and Swamiji gave his reply. In commemoration of this event Madurai Math held a special function on 2 February 2013, attended by about 600 people. Leaflets containing the address of welcome given to Swamiji at Madurai and his reply to it were given to all the audience. **Mauritius:** A public function at the centre on 24 February, in which Sri Rajkeswur Purryag, President, Republic of Mauritius, and Sri T P Seetharam, High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, spoke. About 350 people attended the programme. **Medinipur:** A youth convention on 13 January, in which 354 students and 42 teachers from 24 schools participated. **Mumbai:** At the initiative of the centre the crossing of Ramakrishna Mission Marg and 12th Road, Khar (West), Mumbai, was named Swami Vivekananda Chowk on 3 February. **Mysore:** A youth convention on 30 December 2012,

attended by nearly 2,000 students from various colleges of Mysore. **Nagpur:** Under Swami Vivekananda Swadhyayamala project students are supplied with books on Swamiji, and they have to answer some questions on his life. About 217,000 students of 1,600 schools have participated in this project till now. Under Teachers' Project 2,500 teachers from 11 districts of Maharashtra submitted essays, theses, research articles, drawings, stories, skits, and poems on the life and teachings of Swamiji. The final round of the Interschool Group Singing Competition was conducted on 9 January, in which students of 16 schools in Nagpur participated. A Ratha Yatra, along with a bookstall, an exhibition, and an animation movie on Swamiji, covered 11 districts of Maharashtra from 14 December 2012 to 31 January 2013. About 110,000 copies of pamphlets with pictures and quotations of Swamiji were distributed during the Ratha Yatra. **New York Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center (USA):** Speeches by distinguished speakers followed by musical performances on 11 November 2012 and 3 February 2013, attended by about 300 persons. **New York Vedanta Society (USA):** Publication of two booklets on Swamiji authored by Swami Tathagatananda. **Porbandar:** Programmes on Swamiji's life and message from July 2012 to January 2013 in 25 schools, attended by 4,570 students and 198 teachers. **Puri Mission:** Sadhu Sammelan (congregation of monks) on 3 February, in which 116 monks of various monasteries in Puri town participated. A seminar, a state-level interfaith dialogue, and an intra-faith dialogue from 16 to 18 February, attended by about 700 people. **Ramharipur:** A public meeting and cultural programmes on 25 January, attended by nearly 4,000 people. Towards the end of his life, one day Swami Vivekananda fed a group of Santal men and women at Belur Math with many kinds of delicious dishes. In commemoration of



Ratha Yatra in Maharashtra

this event Swamiji's admirers and devotees, under the auspices of Ramharipur centre, invited 151 Santals from 6 nearby villages to Ramharipur ashrama on 25 February, served them with noon food, and gave each of them one dhoti or sari, a bathing soap, hair oil, and 100 rupees. **Salem:** Various programmes in 39 educational institutions from 3 January to 5 February, attended by about 15,000 students in all. **San Francisco (USA):** A panel discussion and a multimedia presentation on Swamiji at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, San Francisco, on 23 February. About 800 people attended the programmes. **Sargachhi:** Speeches and cultural programmes, including classical music renderings, at Berhampore on 12 and 13 January. **Swamiji's Ancestral House:** Lectures at the centre on 23 January and 9 February, attended by 1,200 devotees. A programme at Netaji Bhavan, Kolkata, on 24 January, attended by 650 people. Five lectures and public meetings in and around Kolkata in January and February, attended by 2,700 persons. **Taki:** A procession on 10 February, in which around 850 people participated. **Vadodara:** A lecture for NCC cadets at Ahmedabad on 13 January, attended by 275 cadets. A public meeting on 24 January on 'The Relevance of the Life and Message of Swami Vivekananda'. A state-level written quiz competition from June 2012 to

February 2013, in which 71,349 students of 1,233 schools in Gujarat participated. Four state-level prizes and 77 district-level prizes were given on 17 February.

New Mission Centre

A branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math has been started at **Comilla**, Bangladesh. The address of the centre is Ramakrishna Ashrama, Thakurpara (South), Comilla, Bangladesh 3500; phone: (880) 81-66031; email: rkmcomil6@gmail.com.

News from Branch Centres

The Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala of **Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore**, celebrated its diamond jubilee from 28 to 30 December 2012 with various events such as meetings, cultural programmes, aquatic display by the students of the Vidyashala, felicitation of its two teachers for their dedicated service, and releasing of a commemorative volume and a musical album. The foundation stone for the proposed staff quarters at the Vidyashala was laid on 29 December.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Morabadi, Ranchi, held a central kisan mela (farmers' fair) on 31 January and 1 February 2013. About 12,000 farmers and villagers participated in the mela.

Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Kolkata, conducted a round-the-clock medical camp during Makar Sankranti Mela at Sagar Island in South 24-Parganas district from 10 to 16 January. In all, 4,243 patients were treated, out of which 42 received indoor medical care. Besides, 150 blankets, 50 pieces of clothing, and 6,000 copies of religious books were distributed to needy pilgrims and monks.


A Science Centre where students can perform various experiments to learn the basic principles of science was inaugurated at **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chennai**, on 9 February.

Achievements

Sri Sanat Haldar, a staff member of **Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar**, won the Gold Medal in the 37th National Yoga Championship in the age group 25–35 (for men) held on 13 February at Hoshiarpur, Punjab, under the aegis of Yoga Federation of India, an alliance affiliated to Asian Yoga Federation and recognized by the Indian Olympic Association.

Relief

Distress Relief • From November 2012 to February 2013 the following centres distributed various items to needy people. **Asansol**: 78 saris and 26 dhotis; **Baranagar Mission**: 30 saris and 14 dhotis; **Barisal** (Bangladesh): 40 saris and 30 lungis; **Belgharia**: 300 saris, 300 lungis, and 400 children's garments; **Cherrapunjee**: 210 saris; **Dinajpur** (Bangladesh): 200 dhotis and 100 chaddars; **Jayrambati**: 4,336 saris; **Kothar**: 198 saris, 690 dhotis, and 75 vests; **Puri Mission**: 1,000 saris; **Ranchi Sanatorium**: 648 bed-sheets; **Sikra-Kulingram**: 1,000 saris and 150 chaddars.

Winter Relief • From September 2012 to February 2013 10,761 blankets were distributed to needy people through the following centres. **Aalo**: 1,000; **Asansol**: 1,394; **Bankura**: 250; **Belgharia**: 300; **Cherrapunjee**: 133; **Delhi**: 638; **Deoghar**: 750; **Dinajpur** (Bangladesh): 300; **Ichapur**: 125; **Jamshedpur**: 250; **Jayrambati**: 2,306; **Jessore** (Bangladesh): 775; **Kamarpukur**: 1,200; **Narottam Nagar**: 250; **Ramharipur**: 250; **Ranchi Sanatorium**: 324; **Sargachhi**: 16; **Tamluk**: 250; **Vrindaban**: 250. Moreover, during December and January the following centres distributed winter clothing to the needy. **Asansol**: 78 shawls; **Chapra**: 220 sweaters; **Kothar**: 10 shawls and 35 jackets; **Mysore**: 100 sweaters. 

Correction • January 2013, p. 16: read 'And Vivekananda described the Vedanta he taught this way:' for 'And Vivekananda described that Vedanta and Ramakrishna taught this way:'